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4 March 1988

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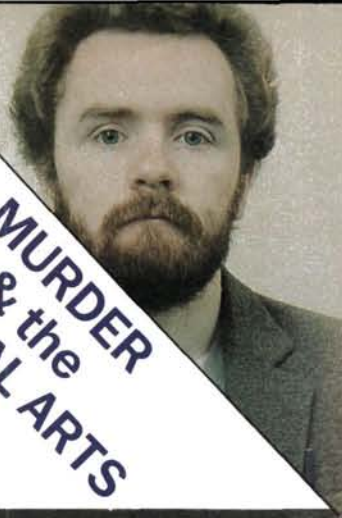
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STATESMAN

- ☐ The man who gave Aids to the west ☐ Doonesbury
- ☐ John Lloyd on the BBC ☐ Lynne Segal on Hatton
- ☐ Parkinson's power play ☐ The Last Emperor

MURDER
& the
MARTIAL ARTS

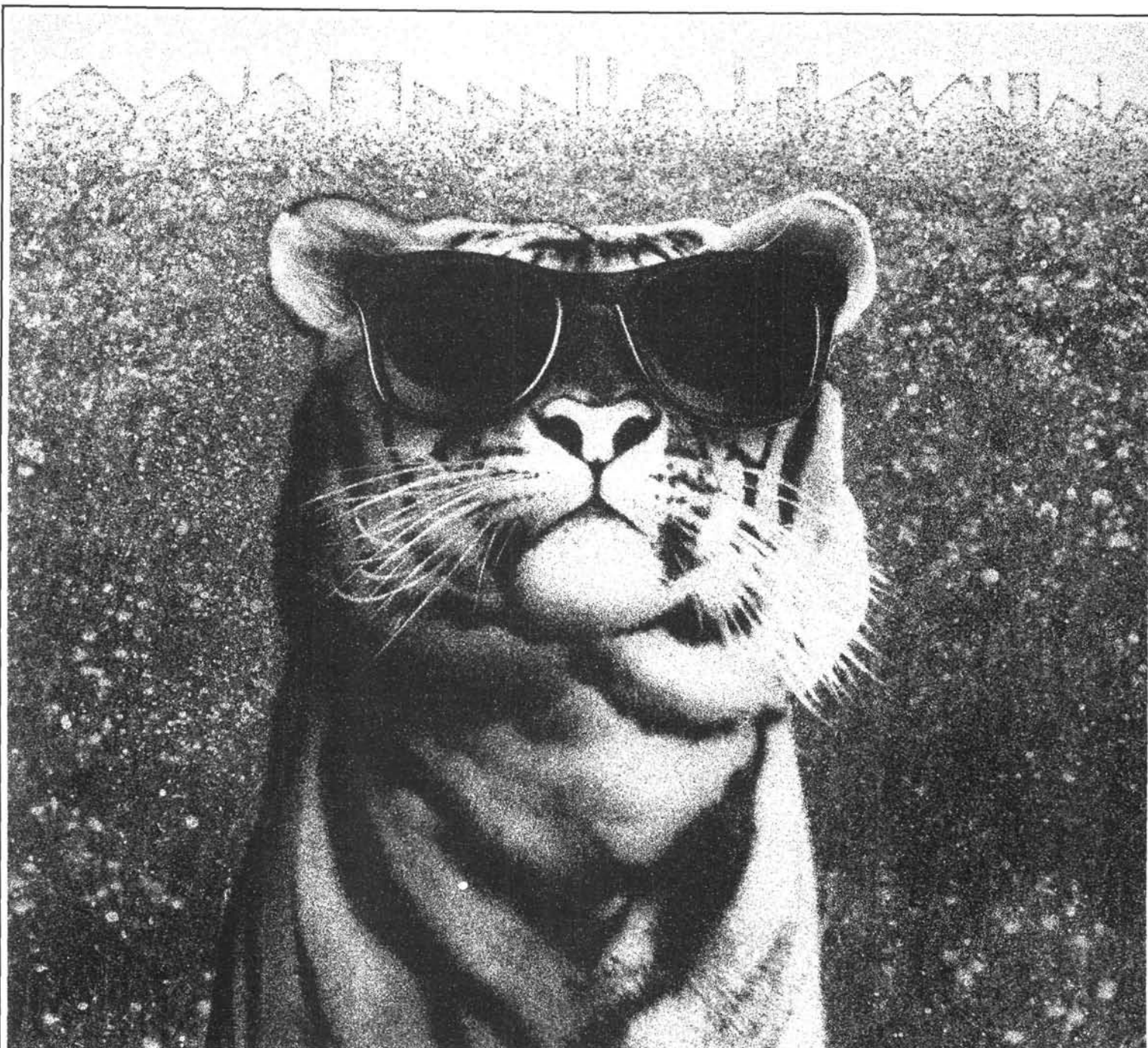


NOAM CHOMSKY

LET THE PLO BE HEARD



Cover photo: John Chapman/Select



If UK 2000 wasn't so important, we'd be happy to remain anonymous.

Is making Britain a better place a bit of a pipedream? Those of us who have become involved in UK 2000 don't think so.

The thrust of this new national venture is to 'green' our cities; restore our industrial heritage, the 19th century mills and warehouses; tackle litter and recycle waste; turn neglected woodlands, canals, ponds and footpaths from eyesores into amenities; and make our tourist sites even more attractive.

UK 2000 will run to the year 2000 and provide local, community-run projects, involving volunteers and the unemployed.

Esso is helping projects and training by providing funds, experience and people. We have seconded skilled staff to contribute to the management of UK 2000, including the Director of UK 2000's Scottish operation.

We already support the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers,

the Civic Trust, Community Service Volunteers and Groundwork, four of the many groups taking part.

Esso is also active with bodies like the RSPB, the Nature Conservancy Council and the Countryside Commission on other environmental projects. In this European Year of the Environment we hope our involvement in UK 2000 will be even more helpful.

UK 2000 is a partnership between industry, voluntary groups and government, but it also needs individual support.

Please can we urge you to find out more, by writing to UK 2000, 2-3 Horse and Dolphin Yard, Macclesfield Street, London W1V 7LG.

Or telephone 01-631 3826/5160.



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A MEMBER OF THE EXXON GROUP

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NEXT WEEK



John Berger (left) on the only role European intellectuals can now adopt; Jolyon Jenkins' guide to the stinking rich; Tom Nairn takes a republican look at the British state

From them that haven't

UB 40

THIS IS Britain's welfare state today. A young girl is refused a grant for shoes — she has three pairs of socks and the DHSS official advises her parents that, worn together, they would make a suitable alternative to shoes. A young couple, the wife six months pregnant, move at last into a council flat, but they have no furniture; they have to sleep on the floor in a sleeping bag and eat out as they have no cooker.

The official who refuses a grant says that they should obtain credit.

A young mother's pushchair and her baby's coat are stolen. An official refuses to replace them as she "did not take reasonable care". A man with no bedding is instructed to keep warm by sleeping with his dog.

Eight million people depend on supplementary benefit. In August 1986 the government imposed swingeing cuts on the one-off grants which officials could pay out to meet exceptional demands for furniture, cookers, bedding, clothes and other unforeseen needs. These cuts were to pave the way for the Social Fund, to be introduced this April; its budget allows for only £60 million for grants in the first year — one sixth of the level of spending prior to August 1986. The remainder of the budget (£140 million) will be for repayable loans (ie, recycling claimants' weekly benefits). The Fund is cash-limited and thus is, in effect, a cruel Unlucky Dip.

The current regime, then, offers a grim glimpse of what life will be like for people on social security after April. Already they are being forced to go without the bare necessities of life, as a timely report from the Child Poverty Action Group (*Single Payments: the disappearing safety net*, £3.95 from CPAG, 1-5 Bath Street, London EC1V 9PY) shows in distressing detail. Beds and bedding, cookers, floor covering, heaters, chairs, tables, babies' cots, pushchairs, children's clothes and shoes — commodities which most people take for granted are being put out of the reach of many claimants. Old and chronically sick people are being refused grants for the bedding, heating or coats that they need to survive, but it's young single people, single parents and the families of the unemployed who are suffering most.

Beveridge described social security as the "safety net" of the post-war welfare state. But from April, the new social security scheme can no longer be that safety net. One-off grants — which actually date back to the 1930s — were essential to that role, as they provided an essential back-up to frugal basic rates of benefit. Weekly benefit is meant only to cover normal everyday items of expenditure; as the government's own Social Security Advisory Committee pointed out in an

official report last July, weekly rates "leave little scope for saving towards major items and . . . claimants need assistance with major or unexpected items of expenditure".

The SSAC has publicly disassociated itself from the new scheme. Charities like Age Concern and the Spastics Society, social services and agencies like the Family Welfare Association and citizen's advice

bureaus, have all protested.

Yet the government remains relentless in its determination to plunge thousands of British citizens into all manner of hardships and indignities to save a few hundred million pounds at a time when the Chancellor rejoices in having some £4 billion to play with in his budget and similarly huge sums are pumped out of the Exchequer every year on, for example, the married man's tax allowance (a largely indefensible subsidy) and mortgage tax reliefs (ditto).

The Labour opposition has quite properly expressed its outrage in parliament. For the moment, no doubt that's all it can be asked to do. But at some time soon Labour and the other opposition parties will have to spell out their alternatives to the government's deliberate impoverishment of the already poor. They must all resist the temptation to romanticise the days of supplementary benefit and its hated predecessor, the National Assistance Board. Both were massive means-tested schemes which, even when halfway decently run, forced ordinary people into the demeaning role of supplicant and placed officials in positions of corrupting power over them.

As Malcolm Wicks argues in this issue (page 10), Labour's policy review must get back to basics. Basic Income schemes, integrating tax and benefits, and even more enticing visions like the Social Dividend, which other parties have already played with, will tempt the fancy of Labour's policymakers. But why not first give the old answers the chance they have never had? A staged programme to get people back to work, and to protect their living standards with a minimum wage; to move people who aren't in the labour markets onto benefits as of right, set at levels which remove the need for means tests; and to make redistributive taxation work for the first time since the late 1940s, would do the trick.

In today's politics, such proposals — though realistic in their own terms — sound, even feel, naive. But they must be articulated and developed if the tide of middle-class greed is to be reversed, and the huge sums of money awash in fiscal welfares and company perks are to be put to decent use. □

DIARY

Since last week's television pictures showed how some Israeli troops deal with "the Palestinian problem", the country's top brass have ceaselessly assured us that they're as shocked by it all as anyone. Hogwash, of course. The order to deal with Palestinian protesters by "force and beatings" came, as recently as last month, from no less a figure than the Defence Minister himself, Yitzhak Rabin. Four soldiers take him at his word, only to find themselves facing court martial. It must all be very puzzling for them.

Just after watching the famous footage, I received some propaganda bumph put out by the Britain/Israel Public Affairs Centre. "Between the selectivity of the cameraman, the reporters and the editors, the implicit need to entertain and the consequent tendency for participants to perform for the camera," it reveals, "television news programmes are particularly bad at presenting anything like objective truth." (Bet you didn't realise the soldiers who battered Wa'll Judi and Osmani Judi last week were performing for the camera.) It adds: "This may well form the basis of a case for a media policy which permits unlimited access to newspaper and radio reporters, but excludes the television cameras."

If the cameras had been banned, of course, last week's incident would never have come to light. I asked the Centre's spokesman, Burt Keimach, if that was his intention. He replied wearily that he was only reporting what "some people in Israel believe", not necessarily advocating a ban himself. Mr Keimach told me that a television picture "will show a sequence of impressions, like an Impressionist painting" (eh?) but "will not show what took place before or after". Keimach said of course he didn't condone the thuggery — and then went on to do so. I must understand, he told me, most of these men are conscripts, 18-21 year-olds, they've got mobs coming at them, they've got weapons they're unfamiliar with, they're frightened . . .

Where, I wondered, had I heard this before? Ah yes: last week's *Sunday Telegraph*, where an article headed "In Defence of Private Thain" had argued that the recently-released British soldier was a "not very guilty man" who had "nearly had his life ruined" merely because he killed an unarmed Irishman. "That would have been a tragedy — and the military authorities are to be congratulated for their efforts to prevent it happening." If Private Thain does ever get forced out of his regiment, he can be sure of a warm welcome in the Israeli Army.

Incidentally, whenever I speak to Israeli propagandists they always mention, sooner or later, that Israel is a very small country. Mr Keimach of the Britain/Israel Public Affairs Centre did not disappoint me. "Israel is a very small country," he said. "Less than the size of Wales. You don't have the luxury of Russia or the United States where, if there's civil unrest, you can go and put it down in a fairly leisurely fashion. In Israel, it must be put down straight away." This idea — that a country's physical size determines

how much official brutality ought to be allowed — is a new one on me. I look forward keenly to the next bit of "civil unrest" in Wales so we can see whether the government sends in troops with live rounds on the Israeli example. I suppose, remembering Winston Churchill and Tonyandy, it wouldn't be the first time.

There is plenty to admire in Anthony Barnett's new book *Soviet Freedom* (Picador, £3.95), though since I am thanked in the acknowledgements for my helpful comments on the manuscript I am hardly an unbiased observer. However, the book — which Anthony describes as a "travelogue of ideas" — has made history in one way that is worth recording. On Monday this week Anthony heard that the copy of *Soviet Freedom* which he had posted to Roy Medvedev in Moscow had been delivered, complete and unabridged, to the addressee. This is no small achievement. Over the years dozens of books about the Soviet Union have been sent to Medvedev from abroad. Until this week not a single one had arrived.

Next week Heinemann will publish *Nor Iron Bars a Cage*, Penelope Tremayne's account of her kidnapping in Sri Lanka a couple of years ago, and I daresay we shall see plenty more features like the one in Monday's *Independent*, which described her as "a female Bulldog Drummond" with a "thirst for adventure". All the article revealed of her work was that she has done some journalism and written "a travel book and a volume of poetry". There was no hint that she had any political affiliations.

ROGER WODDIS

A memo to the staff

According to a programme broadcast by Granada TV this week, entitled "The Taming of the Beeb", the BBC has lost its traditional independence from the government and "is being turned into the State Broadcasting Corporation"

'Duke Hussey is your lord, your boss, your master,
Your chief, your chairman; one that orders you
To do his bidding and commit yourselves
To worshipping the right and her indoors,
To weighing every loaded word you say,
With neutral face and thumb upon the balance.
Such duty as the harlot owes her pimp,
You owe to those who are your governors;
And when you are impartial, honest, fair
And not obedient to their ducal will,
What are you but the enemy within
And shameless traitors to the British way?
Forget the precept that has long held sway
To educate, inform and entertain;
Your only duty henceforth is to crawl,
As some in France submitted to de Gaulle.
Then tame your independent attributes
And place your tongues upon your masters' boots:
Be servile, Adie; come and kiss me Kate,
You have no function but to serve the State.

This is too innocent by half. In 1986, Penelope Tremayne co-wrote (with Ian Geldard, a young Turk from the Federation of Conservative Students) a wildly tendentious and inaccurate pamphlet called *Tamil Terrorism: Nationalist or Marxist?*, which argued that Tamils in Sri Lanka had no legitimate grievances whatever. It was published by the Institute for the Study of Terrorism, a shadowy outfit of anti-Communist conspiracy theorists run by Jillian Becker. Nothing wrong with any of that, of course, as long as she owns up to it. But her attempt to present herself as merely a game old bird who likes a spot of travel should fool nobody.

All sorts of ghosts have been stirred up by the 20th anniversary of 1968, so I suppose it was inevitable that we would hear from His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. An announcement from the World Government of the Age of Enlightenment at Mentmore Towers, Bucks., proudly informs me that the Maharishi has launched a "Global Programme to Create Heaven on Earth Through Perfect Health and a Disease-Free Society". The Master-Plan to Create Heaven on Earth aims for "the development of the highest level of human consciousness, Unity Consciousness — or permanent Bliss Consciousness" and was inaugurated by the bearded wonder himself on 12 January (news travels slowly when you're in Permanent Bliss). The Disease-Free side of the programme was discussed a fortnight ago at a conference in Delhi, where delegates heard that perfect health had been made possible by "the discovery of the unified field of all the laws of nature by quantum physics and by Maharishi's discovery that the unified field is located in the self-referral consciousness of everyone". Happy days are here again.

The Maharishi's grand project bears a startling resemblance to Robert Maxwell's plan for his millions hidden in Liechtenstein, as exclusively revealed in the *Daily Mirror*. The Maxwell Foundation will research a cure for Aids and cancer, it will provide money for the people of Israel ("Jews and Arabs") to find a "lasting peace", it will assist "capable young entrepreneurs throughout the world" and, best of all, it will bring about "the avoidance of conflicts between nations and the elimination of racial hatred throughout the world".

After all these global ambitions, what puzzled me was the final item on the list: "to support charitable institutions in Liechtenstein". The Swiss Embassy in London, which handles Liechtenstein's affairs, was unable to tell me what charities there are in the principality. (It has, I believe, a total population of about 20,000.) Maxwell's spokesman, John Egan, was no more enlightening. "There are no further details available at present on the Liechtenstein charities which will benefit from the Maxwell Foundation," he dictated into my answering machine. "An announcement will be made later this year. End message." I can hardly wait.

Francis Wheen

Botha 'deliberately obstructing peace'

Johannesburg

"PEACE HAS BECOME a threat to public safety," declared the left-liberal weekly *Mail* on its front page last week, following Pretoria's virtual elimination of the black anti-government opposition. Its sentiments were later echoed by church leaders from their pulpits on Sunday and in their remarkable demonstration on Monday. In both instances they also emphasised their determination to move into the gap and establish themselves as the major remaining black opposition.

Their analysis is nowhere more apt than in the government's choice of 18 activists to restrict. They are collectively among the most moderate leaders within the "Democratic Movement". An analysis of their recent political activity shows that

in recent months virtually all played a role in attempting to stop or mediate in conflict between rival black groups.

The 74-year-old Archie Gumede, joint president of the United Democratic Front and now banned, has recently come under fire from more radical sections in the organisation for advocating participation in elections for the triracial parliament, and for accusing some black radicals of using coercive tactics in the townships. Both he and another individual banned last week, A.S. Chetty, were at the centre of attempts to get peace talks off the ground between the UDF and Mangosuthu Gatscha Buthelezi's Zulu-based Inkatha movement in the war-torn ghettos of Pietermaritzburg, where more than 400 people have died in recent months.

South African church leaders contrasted the government's banning of the UDF leaders with its failure to arrest leaders of Inkatha, several of whom have been clearly implicated in murder and assault. The widespread belief is that by having scuppered the peace talks and acting against only one group, the government has handed Pietermaritzburg, and with it the entire Natal region, to Inkatha.

The other UDF president, Mrs Albertina Sisulu, as well as banned Western Cape activists Joe Marks, Joey Marks and Willie Hofmeyr, have played a major role in bringing peace to warring factions in the KTC squatter camp outside Cape Town, preventing the kind of violence which left more than 100 people dead in neighbouring Crossroads two years ago.

And three activists banned in Oudtshoorn had just won a court order restraining the government's official vigilantes, dubbed *Kitskonstabels*, from assaulting and killing people in their township.

"We must conclude that the authorities are deliberately obstructing peace in our country and encouraging violence among our people," said the church leaders in a joint statement before their arrests on Monday. "Their purpose is to use surrogate forces to smash effective opposition to apartheid and to ensure that, as far as possible, it is the blood of black people, and not of white people, that is spilled in pursuance of their aim."

No-one believed the official explanation for the crackdown given by security police chief, General Johan van der Merwe, that the internal organisations were tools in the "revolutionary onslaught" of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party.

It took place more than 20 months into a national state of emergency which has severely debilitated the affected organisations, most notably the largest anti-apartheid grouping, the UDF.

The crackdown had been in the offing for some time. Van der Merwe flew trusted journalists from the South African press to Walvis Bay at the end of last year to explain that Pretoria's major fear was not the ANC's faltering armed struggle but the activities of the internal organisations, and that these would be curbed.

The imminence of by-elections in Standerton and Schweizer-Reineke, where the National Party faces defeat at the hands of the Conservative Party, is no coincidence, and explains the timing of the curbs, if not the curbs themselves.

At the same time, the government had in mind

the countrywide local authority elections in October when blacks, mixed race "coloureds", Indians and whites will, for the first time, all vote on the same day, albeit for racially segregated town councils. Organisations such as the UDF and the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) campaigned against the last black local authority elections in 1983 and the "coloured" and Indian parliamentary elections in 1984. This resulted in embarrassingly low percentage polls which undermined the legitimacy of blacks serving within the government-created structures.

By acting now, the government is trying to pre-empt a repeat of those elections by creating a space for its own more compliant black junior partners to operate without any opposition. The crackdown is part of an overall strategy aimed at outflanking popular support for the radicals through repression, improved economic conditions and upgraded townships for a black urban elite and silencing "alternative" voices in the press.

The central problem now is that there is very little left of the opposition to really prevent the government from having its own way for the moment. The churches, under the leadership of charismatic figures such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Alan Boesak and Frank Chikane, have for the moment stepped into the political vacuum — setting the scene for a potential church-state conflict.

At the very worst, activists are reminding themselves of the decade of the 60s, which began with the government banning the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress, eliminating resistance in South Africa for the entire decade. The only consolation is that 28 years after it was removed from public life, the ANC has been shown to have more popular support than any other political organisation, including, of course, the National Party Government.

Phillip van Niekerk

The Red Cross and Oscar Davis

In Francis Wheen's Diary on 19 February we published an item concerning a talk given to the London Branch of the Red Cross on 31 January by Oscar Davis, the head of that organisation's International Aid Department. Mr Davis has pointed out to us that his remarks at this meeting have been the subject of misunderstanding and misinterpretation and we now seek to set the record straight.

We fully accept that neither the Red Cross nor Mr Davis supports apartheid or any of the coercive measures taken in its name. In carrying out relief work in South Africa and Mozambique, particularly in the non-white communities, the Red Cross observes in word and deed a strict political neutrality which allows it a far greater degree of access and penetration than any other international agency. We apologise to the Red Cross and to Mr Davis for any suggestion to the contrary in our diary item and have agreed to make a contribution to the Red Cross Community Organiser programme in the black and Coloured townships and squatter camps in South Africa. ●

If the caption fits

No 57



I think we should all give the heir to the throne a bit of support! He worries about the state of Britain's architecture, he worries about acid rain and pollution, he wishes he had been born Bob Geldof and could do something about drought and starvation in the third world. But best of all, he has now decided to act. He has decided to do something about his wife's hairdo and ban aerosol sprays. What are either of them saying, thinking, please. Entries to be in by Monday 14 March on a postcard (no need to put the pc in an envelope!!). Ten-pound book token to the lucky winner.

Winner: No 55



Young Conservatives (with apologies to Lennon & McCartney): "She loves you, ok ya, ok ya, ok ya . . ." (Nick Thomas, *Bournemouth*.) Runner up: YCs (shouting): "WE'VE . . . GOT . . . BAD . . . BREATH!" (Sue May, *London*.)

'Hard left shock'

THE GOLDEN rule of political and labour journalism is that a news intro beginning "Labour leader Neil Kinnock suffered a humiliating reverse yesterday . . ." is better than any other.

Hence, the move left shown in the elections for the 39 seats on the Transport and General Workers' Union national executive has been a journalist's godsend. The "humiliating reverse" intro has been pouring out of journalists' computers.

The man central to this interpretation of the election is Brian Nicholson, the defeated chairman of the TGWU executive. A London docker, Mr Nicholson has variously described himself as a Kinnock loyalist or member of the "soft left". The advantage of such a description is that any opponent of Mr Nicholson is automatically seen as an enemy of the Labour leader. Well before the election started, the left became infuriated that the ballot was being torn away from TGWU issues and turned into a referendum on Kinnock.

Undoubtedly, many of the left slate are opponents of Kinnock but the majority have no intention of carpeting the Labour leader. The likely new Chairman, Dan Duffy, has already said "there will be no shift in the executive support for Neil Kinnock. We might have one or two arguments on the executive, but there will be absolutely no change in that". The change in the balance of power on the TGWU also does not necessarily put a block on changes in party policy.

The result does clearly mean that the TGWU will not support an open switch away from unilateralism at the party's crucial 1989 conference, but the TGWU has never anyway been likely to make such a switch. Ron Todd, the union's General Secretary, made this clear in a host of post-election speeches.

For many within the union, the significance of the result does not lie in party politics, but instead in the removal of Nicholson. They believe that he has been a destabilising force, making Todd's job as General Secretary nigh impossible. The relationship between chair of the executive and general secretary is not codified within the union, but previous chairs, most notably the Liverpoolian Stan Pemberton, understood that ultimate authority lay with the General Secretary as the only person elected by the entire union.

Nicholson saw his job differently, leading to quarrels over the appointments of regional secretaries, the use of the chairman's casting vote and so on. Nicholson's efforts to keep the left at bay probably ended up undermining trade unionism and Ron Todd's own position.

Lindsay Gilbert

Whose working-class hero?

THE SEARCH for a "hard left" label to pin on Steve Riley, a notable victor against Brian Nicholson, has clearly called for resourcefulness. The labour correspondents finally plumped for the label "Militant-backed" based on a leaflet announcing Militant's support for the left's complete slate that ranged from Pete Hagger of the Communist Campaign Group to Larry

Grogan, a traditional Labour supporter.

In fact Steve Riley's politics upset Militant's stereotype of the true working-class leader as much as it stumps the media. He is a radical socialist who has never been a member of the Labour Party. Instead he has applied his socialism to his workplace: the Paint, Trim and Assembly section of Fords, Dagenham, where he is a shop steward, and his union branch, of which he is the secretary.

This has been evident in several ways. In recent years, racists have established themselves at Dagenham, where over 60 per cent of the workforce is black. Eighteen months ago, Riley led his section out on strike against a foreman who was distributing fascist literature. Other sections followed. The result is an equal opportunities programme requiring management at all levels to attend a three-day equal opportunities course, alongside shop stewards. This and other anti-racist action is now under negotiation for the whole of Fords UK. In early 1987, Steve Riley's branch led the campaign to force Fords to withdraw from South Africa. Riley is also a strong advocate of Black people's right to form their own organisations within the unions and in the Labour Party.

The condition for the shop stewards' victory on a highly political issue like racism is an aware and active union membership, built up at Dagenham by a group of young shopfloor leaders including Riley, 28, and the 37-year-old black convenor, Joe Gordon.

Mrs Thatcher attacks the unions for not being in touch with their members. When they rebuild this contact, however, the result — in this case the election of an activist like Steve Riley — may not be quite what the right expects.

The defeated candidate, Brian Nicholson, was just the kind of trade union leader who made the union appear separate from its members. The idea behind the TGWU's lay executive is that it has direct contact with the members not only through their two-year elections but through being shop stewards and active in negotiations in their industry or service.

By the time he won the prize of TGWU chairman, Nicholson had lost virtually all direct contact with working dockers. Perhaps Riley is better distinguished from Nicholson not as "Militant-backed" but "membership-backed".

Hilary Wainright

'Has it wrecked your marriage?'

IT'S UNFORTUNATE that a large photograph of Margaret Thatcher looms out from the cover of *Signing On*, "Britain's first national newspaper for unemployed people". In an East London office of the DHSS I couldn't give it away. "Not after seeing her," said one man in the queue. "She put me here in the first place."

Launched last week, *Signing On* declares itself "an independent newspaper politically" and is funded entirely through subscriptions. "We're looking for anyone who will help," says editor Phillip Riley. Although articles by Shirley Williams and Michael Meacher (whose wife, Molly, is on the editorial board), are promised for future issues, there is nothing as yet from the Tory

Party. Riley approached all the parties for submissions, an invitation which the Tories declined. "They thought it was unnecessary — said they had the problem of unemployment under control."

Signing On's first issue has detailed coverage of the benefit changes due in April, analysis of the government's published figures on unemployment, and articles on conservation schemes and YTS. Riley hopes the newspaper will provide solid information and advice, as well as helping "to combat the loneliness" of unemployed people.

In Hackney a banner over the Town Hall reads: "18,473 people in Hackney are out of work. 1 in every 5". At the DHSS on nearby Sylvester Street, sixteen long wooden benches mark out a room where people sit for hours at a time, waiting to be called to one of the four windows. My bundle of newspapers provided one of the few diversions. For Eunice, who has been unemployed "for a long time — over a year", *Signing On* provided the first hard facts about the new benefit system. Sally hadn't known details about the changes either. She found the newspaper "a guideline for people . . . it tells them what they're entitled to." But *Signing On* raised as many questions as it answered. How would they pay rates? What would happen to people under 25? Adrian found it confusing. "There's nothing about special situations," he complained.

In the Job Centre nearby, Fiona praised its "direct, almost tabloid style", but criticised a column urging readers to "tell us what you feel about being unwaged. Has it shattered your marriage; put your children on drugs; wrecked the health of a husband or relative?" "Really depressing," she said.

Currently bimonthly, Riley hopes to see *Signing On* become a weekly paper, on sale in newsagents. For the time being, copies will have to trickle down through local authorities and libraries. But with many libraries facing massive cut-backs, the people who would most benefit from *Signing On* may never see a copy.

Amy Gamerman

Workforce Publications Ltd. 51/52 Queens Gardens, London, W2 3AA, 01-724 5346.

Goodbye to old friends

Among a magazine's best friends are its typesetters and this week the *NS* says goodbye to some very good friends indeed. For 2½ years the staff at Tocatta Graphics have typeset, pasted up and filmed issues of the *New Statesman* each week with great skill, efficiency and good humour. We'd like to thank them individually (and alphabetically) for all their help and support:

Roy Barrett	George Newbury
Jim Bunyan	John Palmer
John Cook	Roger Peters
Kevin Cullen	Bryan Read
Arthur Curtis	John Read
Ray Franklin	Keith Ripper
Paul Gillespie	Graham Scales
Keith Hermon	Don Scott
Dave Judge	Alan Smith
Paul Lawrence	Roland Springford
Jim Moore	Eric Williams

Holding the reins in Spain

WHEN a leader for the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) was finally found at 7am on 23 February, the newly elected general secretary, Julio Anguita, charismatic former mayor of Cordoba, emerged into the grey Madrid dawn mobbed by TV camera crews. For foreign observers, this was just one example of the way the party's annual Congress was thrust into the national news to an extent inconceivable in Britain.

Media excitement was generated in part by the eve of Congress announcement by the previous general secretary, Gerardo Iglesias, that he would not stand for re-election. The ensuing vacuum threatened to allow in a weak and sectarian leader; it took an unprecedented two rejections of the recommended list and massive pressure to persuade Anguita, nicknamed "Red Caliph" to accept nomination.

The PCE's standing in Spanish political culture belies its current battered and weakened state. It emerged from the Franco dictatorship with enormous prestige and did well in the first elections on the strength of its history of courageous opposition. But in the 1982 elections the socialists, under Felipe Gonzalez, swept the board, while the communist vote fell from 2.1 million to 850,000. The right, meanwhile, self destructed in a welter of splits and recriminations. With its image still tarnished by the Franco years and while it is still stuck in the traditional strongholds of land, military, church and aristocracy, Spain has no Thatcherite force.

Tens of thousands of members deserted the PCE, but, unlike in Britain, they didn't join the socialists. When Iglesias replaced veteran leader Santiago Carrillo, he abandoned his former mentor's policy of simply denouncing the PSOE as hopelessly right-wing. Instead he tried to both unite a left coalition opposing specific Gonzalez policies — the about-turn on NATO, the deflationary measures — while trying to find common ground with the somewhat weak and ineffectual left of the socialist party, to defend PSOE from the right. The second prong of this attack was designed to tug PSOE to the left.

Iglesias' dream of the centre of gravity of left politics moving away from PSOE is gathering momentum, aided by deepening disenchantment with Gonzalez's government — especially among feminists, environmentalists and members of socialist youth and trade union groups, and by the PCE's own efforts towards a coalition and greater tolerance. Members expelled during the authoritarian years in the closing stages of Carrillo's regime were invited to the Congress, and leaders of smaller national and regional socialist parties were invited to speak.

The huge efforts of the rank and file delegates — including an all-night session — to persuade Anguita to stand and to avoid a sectarian split are some measure of the popularity of the United Left Coalition within the PCE and the hope that it will continue to build on the small advances made in last year's elections.

Dave Cook

Dave Cook was the British Communist Party's fraternal delegate to the PCE Congress.

POLITICAL SKETCH

Hapless Howe

Edward Pearce

NO NOVELIST would have done anything so crude as to set up as antagonists two figures so close to self-parody as Geoffrey Howe and Gerald Kaufman.

Sir Geoffrey is, in every sense of the word, "comfortable". He has, in Neil Kinnock's new coinage, the art of "reasonability". He uses cliché the way other men use roofing felt — to keep out the worst excesses of the world outside.

Mr Kaufman by contrast is into antagonism. Given the chance he could play the Snow Queen to perfection. His speciality, after all, is the little splinter of ice or glass intended to lodge in the heart and freeze us through. On the topic of South Africa the qualities of both are felt to the full. It would be unfair to say that a moralist was pitched against an immoralist. But certainly a compulsive moraliser (not quite the same thing) was locked in conflict with one who has elevated lassitude into one of the fine arts. With the South African government bent upon suppressing the right to breathe without a certificate countersigned by a police brigadier, something had to be said. Whether it was the right thing and whether it will do any good, is not clear.

Mr Kaufman was anxious to hang responsibility on the Prime Minister directly, "the handmaiden of apartheid", "her eyes bright with exaltation" "the world's most effective ally of apartheid". The dangers of adversarial cleverness are obvious enough. Mrs Thatcher with all her failings, her want of imagination, her tendency to balance intelligence with impercipience, is no racist and no supporter of apartheid. The critical motion which could be made against her on relations with South Africa is weakened if, at its heart, lies a statement which won't stand up.

It is odd to have the Opposition spokesman fail to make the obvious point that the Prime Minister is apprehensively anti-radical, that despite perfectly honourable credentials on race, ones which would welcome black Tory MPs, she stands where she does on South Africa largely as an extension of the Cold War. It is an irrelevant stand in the light of even a circumspect response to Mr Gorbachev, but it is the real base of her thinking and the proper object of criticism.

Listening to Mr Kaufman's speech with its qualities of overpolish, calculated excess and verbal gem-setting was not an experience to make one feel that South Africa was being taken seriously. It was party political where it would be helpful to diminish the party angle, and it made debating points in a way which suggested, truthfully, that on this issue the Commons is a debating society. Much fun was had with the Prime Minister's role-playing as an adversary of South Africa — like Bottom offering to play Thisbe "I will play her with a monstrous little voice". There was also a measure of late evening

compositional fatigue at the peroration "History is on the side of freedom".

We all know the feeling late at night 50 words from the end of the piece when one wants a cup of coffee and six hours sleep more than perfect consistency of argument, but "history on the side of freedom"? Well, things are getting better in the Soviet Union and Taiwan, worse in Pakistan and Ethiopia, and in the African continent they seem to wait more on subsistence than enlightenment. I don't think we can afford that much uplift.

UPLIFT of course is not Sir Geoffrey's way. He has personally been having a gruesome time of it as people insist on pointing out, snubbed by Africans and South Africans alike, obliged to carry out a policy which has always looked more Mrs Thatcher's than ever it was his or the Foreign Office's. It was thus extremely shrewd of Neil Kinnock (everywhere told to shut up) to intervene a little way into the Howe defence with a severely dislocating burst of civility. Of course no one for a moment doubted Sir Geoffrey's revulsion at apartheid or desire to end it, but did he think his reasonable words would actually have any effect?

This, and not smart outrage, is the way into the argument. Sir Geoffrey had been able to put up a perfectly presentable case of the lath and plaster sort, but if you take away the inaccurate charge of not caring about apartheid and settle for the argument "What are the results of withholding sanctions? Has an honestly intended policy actually worked?" then the government is wholly on the defensive. Sir Geoffrey spent much of his time like a man defending the indefensible. It was a little like Dr Johnson's unkind summing up of the fastidious Thomas Grey. "He walked like one who had soiled his small clothes and looked as though he smelt it".

Sir Geoffrey lacks the brute convictions of Mr John Carlisle: "The BBC uses every opportunity to make anti-South Africa propaganda". "Any government would say 'we must take some sort of measures' perhaps heavy handed ones, not necessarily the right ones" and finally "Tutu, avid as he is for publicity, got himself arrested". This indeed is not Sir Geoffrey's way. What he has to explain is why the withholding of sanctions has been followed not by minor reform and diminished involvement in Angola and Mozambique, but by the arrest of everybody with a black skin and a political opinion and a suspension of argument to make Kafka and Orwell shake their heads sadly behind the veil? It is also possible to ask (and get no answer) why the sanctions of Eugene ter Blanche, a man with the mental refinement of Godzilla and a couple of by-elections with fewer voters than you would get in a ward of Surbiton, should weigh so heavily, if this is not a government to respond to threats?

My impression is that Sir Geoffrey is not happy, that the line with which he is stuck does not convince him. All the more reason to avoid sneering at him. The utility of a dry House of Commons with no powers of initiative is that one can win an argument there. And to fall into a little optimistic rhetoric of one's own, in the winning of paper arguments is the beginning of persuasion. But only a tiny beginning; Mrs Thatcher still has that Cold War to fight. □

Bring on the pinko commie fags

New York

FOR THE first time in 36 years, foreigners can be admitted to the United States regardless of their political ideology — at least until March 1989. A few months ago, Congress revised a 1952 law that barred aliens who are anarchists, communists, or advocates of "world communism" or the overthrow of the United States government. In addition, those who arrive here can no longer be turned away, even if the US government thinks they intend "to engage in activities which would be prejudicial to the public interest, [or] endanger the welfare, safety or security of the United States".

When applying for a visa, visitors to the States must still answer questions about their political backgrounds. But a spokeswoman for the US Bureau of Consulate Affairs states that if individuals are not actively involved in a terrorist organisation, the responses cannot be used as grounds for denying entry.

The law, known as the McCarran-Walter Act, has been used in the past to protect the United States from Charlie Chaplin, Italian playwright Dario Fo, former NATO General Nino Pasti, Spanish filmmaker Luis Bunuel, Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge, and Japanese survivors of the Hiroshima bombing who were on

their way to attend a 1982 disarmament rally in New York. Writers have also been considered too dangerous to be admitted; Graham Greene, Carlos Fuentes, Czeslaw Milosz and Nobel prize winners Pablo Neruda and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, among others.

McCarran-Walter's ideological exclusion was deleted last December by an amendment co-sponsored by Congressman Barney Frank, a Massachusetts Democrat, and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a Democrat from New York.

But unless Congress enacts another amendment which Frank and 80 co-sponsors have proposed, the change will be in effect only until March 1989. There was not enough support last year for a permanent revision of the McCarran-Walter Act. Frank is planning to try again, with new legislation that would permanently delete the political grounds for excluding aliens.

The pending bill would also repeal provisions of the Act that deny visas to aliens "who have had one or more attacks of insanity" or "are afflicted with sexual deviation" (interpreted as homosexuality). The sponsors of the bill also want to see some procedural changes in the law to permit the opportunity for judicial review when a visa is refused. The bill is currently before a committee in the House of Representatives, where it may be voted on by next month.

One of the first beneficiaries of the revised law is Margaret Randall, a feminist poet and writer who had to give up her American citizenship when she

lived in Mexico. She has written about her travels in Cuba and Latin America, and criticised US military intervention in Vietnam. Randall, 50 years old, is married to an American and currently is a visiting professor of English at Trinity College in Connecticut.

Randall's application for permanent residence was denied in 1986 after a literary inquisition before an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) judge. Basing his decision on 2,744 pages of Randall's writing, the judge ruled that Randall should be deported as provided by the McCarran-Walter Act because she advocated "the doctrines of world communism". He described one of her books, *Cuban Women Now*, as "consistent in its praise for the efforts of the Castro communist revolution in improving women's rights".

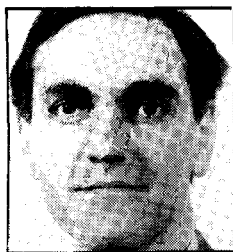
Randall appealed the decision, supported by a wide coalition of professional and civil rights organisations, feminists and writers. The officials who prosecuted Randall "asked things like, had I ever written a poem praising free enterprise, as if that should have made some kind of difference to someone".

Susan Jaffe

NEW STATESMAN INDEX

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BEN PIMLOTT

Robin Hood's gift of good citizenship to the rich

LABOUR IS THE party of redistribution of income and wealth (as Harold Wilson might have said) or it is nothing. In practice, of course, the Tories have been much the most effective redistributors, a point that Nigel Lawson will rub home on Budget Day when he reminds the haves, once again, how much they should thank him for. Labour did manage to do something positive about redistributing income (though scarcely wealth) in the 1940s, but had virtually no impact in the '60s and '70s. Even in the revolutionary but impotent '80s, economic redistribution has scarcely been the most obvious implication of Labour policy. If Labour is to be rationally extremist at the next election, as I fervently hope, here is something to put right.

Hence when we read the lead story in last Friday's *Times*, alarm bells rang. LABOUR TO END POLICY OF HIGH TAXES FOR RICH said the headline. Was yet another hallowed principle heading for the trash can? A few frantic telephone calls confirmed that so base a thought had never entered the collective heads of the six-strong Policy Review group on Economic Equality, chaired by John Smith. The intention, everybody insisted soothingly, is to work out how to tax the rich more heavily than Labour has in the past succeeded in doing, not less. Bravo. Nevertheless, like John Hills' excellent article on the Chancellor's tax plans last week, *The Times* story was a reminder of what a ticklishly difficult issue levelling down is. It also showed how easy it is for people to get the wrong impression.

What should the role of taxation be in a socialist plan? What part do tax pledges play in the winning or losing of elections? Only the questions of defence and state ownership make Labour politicians twitch so nervously.

Redistribution can take many forms. Letting the rate of interest on capital fall (what Keynes called "the euthanasia of the rentier") is one; spending public money more equitably is a second. Others include cutting indirect taxes, enforcing a minimum wage and equal pay, and (above all) reducing unemployment. Yet another is the imposition of real, as opposed to purely optional, taxation on inheritance. Were it not, indeed, for the annoying sentimentality of the British public, post-mortem *confiscation* — a remedy favoured by R. H. Tawney — might have much to recommend it. ("On this point the next Labour government should, in my opinion, go all out," wrote the idol of Neil Kinnock and the lamented SDP, following the pusillanimity of the Attlee administration. "A low maximum should be fixed [eg £25,000 to £50,000] for wealth to be transmitted to heirs, and everything above it should be taxed 100 per cent.")

For which three cheers, in principle. In practice, however, the handiest, most readily adjustable, and in many ways fairest, instrument of redistribution is progressive income tax. The problem is how to ensure that, in reality, it not only affects the right people, but also does so in such a way that the voters in general do not revolt.

The difficulty in the past has been the high correlation between size of income and the ability to find legal means to wriggle out of paying tax. That is why some Labour policymakers now regard preoccupation with a high marginal rate of tax for top earners as a red herring (the perception that stimulated the *Times* report). As Hills pointed out, broadening the base of tax — so that many things currently exempt would be brought in — could do much more to ensure that the rich pay up than a high (theoretical) marginal rate.

One useful step would be to take a leaf out of the Australian Labor government's book and tax companies directly for the (hitherto tax-free) perks they bestow on employees in lieu of salary. Another would be to dig in hard to nominal, as opposed merely to realised, capital gains. (Tawney again: "The exemption from taxation of gains arising from capital appreciation seems to me about as rational as a close season for sharks.")

“While Labour needs to tax the rich until the pips squeak, over the next three years it must convince people that socialism is something the majority of the fortunate must wish to pay for”

The most important point, however, is that tightening the ring around plutocracy needs to be combined with a *genuinely* progressive taxation structure. It is no good making a great show of squeezing the balloon at the top end of big salaries (even if this is done effectively), if you ignore the middle and the bottom: most rich people are not very, very rich and so the bulk of their incomes escapes the highest rate. The pretty simple step of abolishing the upper earnings limit for employees' National Insurance payments would immediately have an impact on the middle ranges of the incomes of high earners, while netting a great deal more than the most rigorous assault on the peaks could realistically hope to achieve.

But there is a rub. You cannot catch the rich in this way (ie by making them pay a higher percentage of all their incomes, not just the top part) without jolting the moderately affluent too. Abolishing the upper earnings limit for National Insurance would begin to affect earners above £15,000 pa, which means that some 4½ million tax units (that is, single people and jointly-taxed couples) would pay more than at present, including 2½ million in the £15,000 to £20,000 range. And that is precisely an income zone (especially where two-earner families are involved) in which Labour desperately needs to recapture votes.

Can you promise to tax people more heavily, and still hope to win their support? The conventional wisdom is no: hence Labour's historic ambivalence and angst. Before the last election the party moved from a pretty sensible statement on taxation policy to Conference (incorporating some of the above points) to pre-polling-day panic. The item in the manifesto on "Paying for the Recovery Programme" contained four terse sentences. To meet the £6 billion price tag on its plans, Labour would borrow £3 billion. To make up the balance it would refrain from cutting standard rate income tax. Otherwise it would merely impose a wealth tax on the richest 1 per cent and reverse Tory tax cuts on the top 5 per cent. In short, only the disgustingly opulent would suffer under Labour — not you, dear voter. During the campaign it was announced that nobody earning less than a figure plucked out the air (and fondly believed to be beyond the dreams of target electors) would pay an extra penny.

It backfired. As Hugh Gaitskell found when he rashly promised to pay for his 1959 programme without raising tax, offering something for nothing is bad psychology. In 1987, the Tories were able to take Labour to the cleaners. Faced with "neutral" costings of their programme, Labour leaders were caught between having to admit that, after all, ordinary folk might have to pay an unspecified amount; and hinting darkly that above the cut-off "abyss" figure, taxation would be massive. Labour became, in the public mind, more than ever the party of high taxation; and also the party that was shifty about it.

Not only bad psychology, but bad political morality as well. The trouble is that, as so often in the recent history of the luckless Labour Party, socialism and indices of public opinion seem to pull in contrary directions. As a result, doctrine becomes a guilty secret, best kept out of the public eye and only discussed among consenting adults. Yet here surely is an aspect of doctrine that must not be gainsaid. For socialism cannot simply be constructed as a bandit attack on the stinking rich. It requires an acceptance of civic responsibility on the part of all those lucky enough to be able to contribute something to the common good.

A point that needs to be stressed in the Policy Review group's report, due to be delivered this summer, is that while Labour needs to tax the rich until the pips squeak, it cannot afford merely to be a Robin Hood party. The task over the next three years will be to convince people that socialism is not state-enforced charity but something the majority of the fortunate must wish to pay for.

It should not be impossible. As the health service collapses, education breaks apart and beggars fill the city streets, there will be increasing opportunities to persuade the public that it is in everybody's interest to replace the philosophy of individual greed with a modest degree of individual sacrifice. That — not a dismal attempt at sugaring the pill — is what the battle against Thatcherism is all about. □

Mean tests for the poor

What's the connection between taxes and benefits? None says the Chancellor. But the link should be plain, writes MALCOLM WICKS in the second of our Budget series

ONLY TWO WEEKS AFTER Mr Lawson presents his Budget on 15 March, social security for the poorest is reformed. Are the two events connected? To judge from much of the debate surrounding them, it would seem not: the Chancellor will not dwell on the poor, and the Treasury's assessment of fiscal change will concern such matters as inflation and imports, not child support or poverty.

Yet consider, for a moment, the fate of two families as Mr Lawson wrestles with just how many billions are at his disposal. Family A comprises a married couple, with a single earner — a company executive on £30,000 a year, with fringe benefits and a substantial mortgage and pension contributions. Family B are an unemployed couple with two children, aged 4 and 6. Examples then from the two ends of two nations. Yet Family A receives each week from the "welfare state" more than Family B — £103.41 as against £101.98. But whereas the poor family derive their income from the complex world of social security entitlement — supplementary and housing benefits, free school meals and welfare milk — Family A draws from a quite different pool of official beneficence — the privileged world of tax allowances and reliefs on mortgage, pension contributions and company car. (The calculations come from the Child Poverty Action Group in their Budget submission.*)

To fail to relate the Chancellor's statement — very much the Budget for the better off — and the social security reforms — affecting the budgets of the worst off — is not only to miss conceptual links. It is also to fail to grasp the opportunities that exist for considerable redistributions of income — not only between income groups, but also between those with and without caring responsibilities — and also within families, between husbands and wives, fathers and mothers.

It was Richard Titmuss, Britain's most creative social policy thinker, who argued, back in 1955, that there existed a "social division of welfare". (Fortunately his essay is now available again, in a new volume, *The Philosophy of Welfare*, recently published by George Allen & Unwin). Titmuss meant that alongside the well understood welfare state of benefits and services, two other systems operated: fiscal welfare and occupational welfare. It is not irrelevant to note that his lecture over three decades ago was prompted by concerns from the right, those troubled by the "burden" of the welfare state.

Tax reliefs and allowances are today worth many billions of pounds, including tax relief on

mortgage interest payments at £4,750 million. Fringe benefits are also formidable: Inland Revenue statistics for 1983/84 show that, for Directors earning £50,000 or above, taxable fringe benefits alone were worth £3,430 per annum.

Although all three systems affect welfare, they are different in crucial respects. While social security benefits are under tremendous financial constraint — and their recipients often regarded as sufferers from, in the words of John Moore, "the sullen apathy of dependency", the two other systems are buoyant and they disproportionately help the rich. As Titmuss warned, "they are simultaneously enlarging and consolidating the area of social inequality".

Whereas the poor family derives income from the world of social security — supplementary and housing benefits, free school meals and welfare milk — Family A draws from a world of official beneficence — the privileged world of tax allowances and reliefs on mortgage, pension contributions and company car

There are implications here for the Opposition, as the Labour Party's review process gets into its stride — the need for a social and financial policy strategy towards the many-faceted aspects of Britain's welfare state, incorporating not just

public expenditure but tax expenditures too. Such a strategy might come from a number of significant, albeit ad hoc, moves, involving the kinds of policies advocated by John Hills in his article last week — greater progressivity in the tax system, the restriction of income tax allowances to the basic rate etc. Or it could come about by the actual integration of income taxation and social security.

Curiously, in the past, most advocates of this approach have come from the new right, for example the IEA's advocacy of negative income tax, and there was the Heath government's 1972 advocacy of Tax Credits, leaving the idea of integration without powerful advocates on the left. There are a number of problems — *perhaps* some insuperable — about this seemingly attractive approach, but the Labour Party's policy review process is surely the time to subject the idea to proper investigation?

Poverty trap

The most dramatic — and absurd — indicator of the failure to think about benefits and taxation together is the existence of the poverty trap. For Britain's poor families in work, every extra pound earned can be lost, either through extra income taxation and national insurance contributions (thanks to the absurdly low levels at which income tax now operates), or by the withdrawal of means-tested benefits, such as Family Income Supplement and Housing Benefit. Policy makers have grappled with this one ever since the problem was highlighted by Frank Field and David Piachaud in the pages of this journal, back in 1971.

The impact of the new Social Security Reform is to reduce the extremes of the poverty trap, while sucking more people in: while it will no longer be possible to end up actually worse off after earning extra money, the numbers of low incomes facing what is really a "marginal tax rate" of over 70 per cent are estimated to almost double — from 275,000 to 545,000. Moreover, as CPAG point

"Welfare" for the rich and welfare for the poor

	Single earner married couple on £30,000 pa		Unemployed couple with 2 children aged 4 and 6
	£/week		£/week
Married Man's allowance at 50% (a)	16.79	SB: couple	49.35
Mortgage Interest Tax Relief + pension (b)	71.89	2 children	20.80
Company car	9.23	housing costs	27.75
NI personal pension subsidy	5.50	school meals	2.33
		welfare milk	1.75
TOTAL	103.41	TOTAL	101.98

Notes

- (a) difference between the Married Man's Tax Allowance at 50% (applicable to 30,000) and at 27% basic rate;
(b) assuming MMA already set against income, £281.25 allowable interest on mortgage, maximum contribution to personal pension for a full year.

Source: Child Poverty Action Group, *Chance for a Change: the 1988 Budget and Beyond*, 1988

* *Chance for a Change: the 1988 Budget and Beyond*, available from CPAG, 1-5 Bath Street, London EC1V 9PY, price £2.



seven people are dependent on such benefits. Unemployment, of course, has mainly fuelled this rise, but rising numbers of one parent families should not be ignored.

The sheer size of the numbers involved is a key reason the system was judged by government to be ripe for reform. But while this administration has its own — largely cost-cutting — agenda, the overall dynamics should not be forgotten. The current round of reform has parallels in the past.

Forget the details for a moment — means-tested public assistance has dominated social security since the war, whether as National Assistance (1948); Supplementary Benefits (1966) or Income Support (1988). Only the names and details are changed to protect — sometimes harass — the innocent. What is different today is the scale, the motives and the atmosphere. Too many claimants, grotty offices, impossible regulations, and a militant staff are why social security is fast moving up on the inside lane to brush shoulders with the NHS as the social issue of the day. So critics must keep their eye on the ball — mass means testing can never work, with dignity. The Social Fund is worse (and will be welcomed mainly by the private loan shark), but it replaces a system that was itself undignified and demeaning, inadequate and often unworkable.

A further feature of social security today is the increasing reliance on means testing among families in work. The coming battleground will be child support: having successfully resisted the danger of a means tested child benefit emerging from Norman Fowler's Social Security Reviews, the supporters of universal child benefits have been shaken by recent events. The decision to freeze the level of the benefit this April was linked to the initiation of an internal review into its future.

Meanwhile the new Family Credit, the enhanced successor to the Family Income Supplement, provides a possible prototype for a more ambitious means testing of child benefit, should this become a real political starter. Together the two moves are significant: CPAG calculate that the frozen level of £7.25 for child benefit compares to £7.80, if it had kept pace with prices since 1979, and £9.55 if it had kept pace with earnings. And while FIS only reached about 210,000 poor families, Family Credit is estimated to reach 470,000.

If universal child benefits were to go, that would remove the only element in either the social security or tax system that recognises the extra expenses incurred by all families with children — child tax allowances having been abolished in the late 1970s when they were amalgamated with family allowances into the new unified child benefit system.

The sad fact is that at a time when unprecedented billions of pounds are up for grabs — not only through proposed tax cuts, but also via family taxation reform — the needs of children will not be on the agenda. Moreover social security developments signal a possibly decisive move away from universal child support. The government's critics will need to do more than mouth ironic comments about "the party of the family" if it is to halt this strategy in its tracks. □

Malcolm Wicks is the author of A Future for All: do we need a welfare state? published by Penguin.

NEXT WEEK: Tax and the rich

out, tax cuts will make little difference — Family Credit and Housing Benefit will now be based on net earnings, so that when income increases, following tax cuts, benefits will decline.

How fares social security? The April changeover in social security is an important event and it sees the implementation of much of the 1986 Social Security Act. Out goes supplementary benefit to make way for Income Support. And within this, extra weekly additions, for such things as heating and special diets, will go and instead major groups — elderly people, families with children, and one parent families — will receive special premiums. Most controversially, the system of single payments, for such items as bedding and furniture, will be replaced by the Social Fund which generally will provide loans — not grants. For the poorest families in work, the Family Income Supplement will be replaced by the Family Credit (which *will* still be paid to mothers, due to an eleventh hour change of governmental mind, so reversing the original plan which would have meant the new credit going through the pay-packet — therefore mainly to fathers). Housing

Benefits are also being changed — and largely cut.

For the poorest, these are important changes. Some will receive less and the Social Fund will be the focus of attention. There are indications that John Moore himself has serious doubts about the wisdom of the Fund and there have even been hints that the Government would like to off-load the scheme onto local authorities. Social services departments will, in any case, bear the brunt of much client need — and anger. This week Robin Cook announced Labour's plan of campaign on the issues. Expect the air to be full of fury about this feature of Conservative reform, as the already maze-like social security system becomes tangled up in blue.

Mass means test

But we must not lose sight of longer-term trends and policy directions. There has been a gigantic increase in the number of citizens dependent on social security for their basic income. Between 1979/80 and 1988/89 the numbers receiving supplementary benefit grew from 2.9 million to almost 5 million, meaning that today some one in

Survival of the species

A new generation of multiple rapists and murderers have looked to martial arts for their skills and beliefs. YVONNE ROBERTS looks for the links between the cult and the crime

ON THE NIGHT before John Francis Duffy, "The Man with Laser Eyes", was sentenced to serve at least 30 years for the murder of two women and the rape of five others, a small group spent its fourth night on a crash course of Wishu, a form of karate, in a large and uncomfortable dance studio, a walk away from the Old Bailey, in Covent Garden.

The Sifu or master, leapt and twirled gracefully, wielding long bamboo sticks and cutlasses, like all those lethal Nijinskis seen in every martial arts video. The trainees, a mix of schoolboys, secretaries, City men, a bus driver and office workers, each of whom paid £50 for the 5-night course, looked ungainly and macabre in contrast; the unhinged dancing a highland fling with every ligament cut.

One of the many ironies around the use of the martial arts as part of a pornography of violence is that in order for the fantasy to satisfy, not just privately but in public as well, the individuals who become addicted to its ethos have to be proficient. And the better they become, the more equipped they are to kill.

The National College of Karate in Judd Street, near King's Cross, is one of the places John Duffy chose to train. Unlike many of the "clubs" which appear and disappear overnight and have highly dubious masters who come straight from the David Carradine school of casting, the National College is well run and supervised. Whatever the members' individual motivation, this is a place for serious training.

In the reception area, a poster advertises a book, *Hap-ki-do Self Defence for Women*, price £2.95. "Time to get tough over rape" says judge" reads one of the blurbs designed to give the accurate impression that women receive insufficient protection from the Establishment. Another of the ironies of this world is that it persuades the martial arts enthusiast, male or female, to see others (be it the rapist, the mugger, the Russians, a woman) as The Enemy. And as The Enemy, they get what they have coming to them not because of what they've done — but because of what they might do.

"Force — How Much is too Much?" is the headline on an article by Harry Cook, 3rd Dan Shotokan, in an issue of *Fighting Arts International*, one of a handful of British martial arts magazines. "As society is perceived as becoming more violent and lawless, allowing dangerous and violent criminals an apparent degree of freedom to do as they wish," he writes, "people become interested in systems which allow them to defeat the mugger at their own game. This

approach is best summarised by the expression, 'Better to be judged by twelve, than carried by six.'"

On Friday, John Duffy was judged for some of his crimes, those committed between June 1984 and October last year. In two out of the seven rapes, he had an accomplice, still not found. In two of the murders committed by Duffy, the women received karate chops around the head and were strangled with a tourniquet garotte. In *Ninja Death Vow*, one of a library of cheap books with a Ninja theme, manuals of mutilation, it records how the Kunoichi women ninja cut off the cries of courtesans with "hemp garottes". It is also a favourite form of death in *The Jaws of the Dragon*, one of a number of violent martial arts videos Duffy watched regularly. Duffy also tied some of his victims' thumbs behind their backs, a popular method in survivalist handbooks, as was the trip wire Duffy used across the path of one of his victims.

“A study of 500 rapists found that “[the rapist] is not much in touch with his own needs and feelings, except for anger” — also the picture of almost any number of non-criminal men”

Three times over that two year period, Duffy was released on bail and on two occasions, he killed while free. Both the Metropolitan Police, examining 23 rapes, and the Surrey Police knew in May that they were looking for someone with martial arts expertise — and yet the pieces were not fitted together until five months later.

"One of the senior police officers who interrogated Duffy was struck by the meticulous planning which went into his attacks" wrote Paul Keel in *The Guardian* on Saturday, treating almost as a throwaway thought a theme which should have been a central part of the detection. "The detective said: 'He was laying in wait and then ambushing his victims'." He might have added that Duffy almost certainly regarded his victims as "the enemy".

Big Men

For the immature, and the inadequate, the martial arts and their soul-mate, survivalism, don't just make a man feel Big, they also justify the transition from fantasy into reality; kill or be killed. In the reporting of the Duffy case and in the reactions of the police, however, there has been an anxiety to ignore this now clearly identifiable type and instead to treat Duffy as that old familiar, "the maniac", "the beast"; unquestionably a

one-off. Yet, already in the queue of "one-offs" which John Duffy has joined is, among others, Donald Neilson, the "Black Panther"; John Steed, the M4 rapist who shot a prostitute in his car in Park Lane; "Pete the Pole" Chmilowskyj who abducted and raped women and Michael Ryan, the man responsible for the Hungerford massacre. All planned their assaults like military campaigns and put their faith in building up their bodies.

In the press coverage of Michael Ryan and John Duffy, the similarities are striking. They show how in "revealing" the "beast", the media makes its own contribution to creating a myth of "normal" masculinity which makes it inevitable that another Duffy will again soon emerge. Ryan was "a timid looking 11 year old"; Duffy, "a lovable three year old". Ryan was "a spoilt mummy's boy"; Duffy's former wife Margaret said he blamed her for the one rape he told her he had carried out. "I would not respond to him — it was all my fault." Always a woman to bear ultimate responsibility for the distortions which masculinity imposes. Always the erroneous assumption that male sexuality is a monster which it only takes a "bad" woman to trigger off, out of control.

The *Daily Star* also said of Ryan: "He dreamed of being a Rambo figure but he was really a wimp." The *Sunday Mirror* quoted the manager of Duffy's karate club: "Duffy seemed a bit of a wimp compared to the others." Ryan was a loner. Duffy had a low sperm count which apparently made fatherhood almost impossible. "In the dock at the Old Bailey," offered Paul Keel in the *The Guardian*, "Duffy seemed an unlikely culprit . . . slightly built . . . (he) gave an appearance of insipid youth . . ."

In the dock, to me, Duffy resembled as likely a culprit as any other man, shorter than most with a pock-marked skin, he was distinguished only by his ordinariness — and his eyes, two bottomless black holes. (But even in this aspect, almost every woman can recount at least one story in which a stranger uses eye contact to try and intimidate; that is nothing new in the armoury of sexual warfare.)

In 1979, an American study of 500 convicted rapists found that while few were psychopathic, the majority did exhibit certain characteristics: "[the rapist] is not much in touch with his own needs and feelings and, except for anger, his emotional life seems impoverished," said the report, also painting the picture of almost any number of non-criminal men. "[He] has an anxiety and a restless dissatisfaction with the existing circumstances of his life . . . resulting from a feeling of powerlessness. At the root of all this are deep seated doubts about his adequacy and competence as a person."

This kind of man finds an easy home with martial arts and the cult of survivalism. The magazines and the mail order firms supply the wardrobe. A full ninja suit with hood costs only £22.95, a samurai sword, £45.95. Later this year, once the Criminal Justice Bill becomes law, some martial arts weapons, including presumably the



Camera Union

'Thousands in the West practice martial arts as a sport . . . In the East, it is more of a mental discipline. Here, for some, sex and violence have become involved'

butterfly knife Duffy carried, will no longer be sold, a move which does not impress Bey Logan, editor both of *Combat* (the oldest British martial arts magazine with a circulation of 47,000) and *Traditional Karate* (circulation 30,000).

Both magazines tend to cater more for the thousands who practise the martial arts, among them kendo, tae kwondo, karate, kickboxing and Indian kalari, as a sport rather than an oriental version of the Ku Klux Klan. "Weapons in martial arts were traditionally made by peasants out of nothing, for self-protection" Bey Logan says. "And as long as we have peasants, they will always find a way of making weapons, whether or not they are banned."

"In the martial arts," he says, "the west has tended to crash into the East. In the East, the patriarchal society has meant there has been respect for elders, the young do what they are told, there is control. And the martial arts are much more of a mental discipline. Here, for some, sex and violence have become involved. The mental discipline and philosophy has been forgotten." He is particularly contemptuous of the Ninja cult in which martial arts and survivalism are stitched together with an invisible seam. A magazine called *Ninja Strike Force*, published in the USA but on sale here (£2.50), has such gems as "The Day the Ninja beat the Russians"; a session at a training camp and, bizarrely, a chunk of Psalm 18 "... I crushed them so they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet . . .". God is on our side.

The leading survivalist magazine is *Survival Weaponry and Techniques*, established two years ago by the present editor, Greg Payne. Its circulation is around 30,000. (Marshall-Cavendish also have a part-work, *Combat and*

Survival.) Greg Payne's magazine offers advice on how to sharpen survival knives; the correct kit a la Michael Ryan for outdoor manoeuvres plus endless ads for war games (£15 a day including the first 12 rounds); Nam jungle boots (£25.95) and badges from the Third Reich, Rhodesia (sic) and various other ignoble hot spots in colonial history. The tone in these magazines is primitive, racist and right-wing, the formula unchanging: an obligatory article on Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Marilyn Monroe of survivalism and letters on the imminent arrival of hordes of Muscovites (attracted perhaps by the reasonable price of the Nam boots?). "Survivalism," says Greg Payne, "means learning self-reliance in every aspect of life. Who knows when the world order might change or the plague hit or society get even more violent?"

Easy hunting

One of the popular theories about why men resort to violence towards women is that it is in retaliation against their growing independence. In survivalism; in the cases of Ryan and Duffy and Stead and Neilson, arguably, they didn't even notice the "changing role" of women. Instead, what they were searching for is a battleground, an event, a personal war, in which the Enemy had to be female to provide the ultimate plunder — and the least personal risk; cowardice in the name of manhood.

What marks out Duffy particularly is that both strangers and his wife were his victims. And in this, he exposed the link which connects the extraordinary "beasts" much loved of the press who commit sexual crimes against strangers with the majority of rapists, ordinary men, often

known to those they harm.

Margaret Duffy was beaten "two or three times a week", violence always leading to intercourse. Initially she was too intimidated to go to the police. Under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) police can arrest a man whom they suspect has assaulted or may assault his partner — without the woman making a complaint. While training in domestic violence in the Met has improved, there has been only a small rise in arrests. Women across the country are still being turned away when they seek help, men are still killing their partners at the rate of one a month, in spite of court injunctions. It was quite rational for Margaret Duffy as a battered woman to feel so isolated. She was raped by her husband. That is still not an offence in this country. And when the rape is outside marriage, many remain silent. How many of Duffy's victims who might have had vital evidence did not go to the police?

In 1982, Judge David Wild advised his jury in a rape case, "Women who say 'No' do not always mean 'No'. If she does not want it, she has only to keep her legs shut and she would not get it without force and there would be marks of force being used." In the Duffy case, the women who followed David Wild's ludicrous advice died. The Enemy struck back and paid the ultimate price.

Survivalism and some aspects of the martial arts offer comfort for a type of man poisoned in some way by the notion of what is and isn't masculine. The attitude of the Establishment ensures that for these hunters, women are easy prey. John Duffy claimed amnesia when his arrest became unavoidable, yet he still remembered his karate moves. A man of whom survivalism must be proud. □

Coal to compete, nukes to be nursed

This privatisation is being sold as completely different.

JOHN WINWARD tests the hopes and claims

THE PROPOSALS for restructuring the electricity industry set out in last week's White Paper mark a new, decisive turn in the privatisation programme. Cecil Parkinson has, at least in the estimation of his own back benchers, delivered on competition and, in doing so, shown the Conservative Party to be the true champion of the consumer.

You do not have to be a member of the Conservative Party to welcome the introduction of competition. If the nationalised industries have been "unresponsive monoliths", the electricity generation industry has been one of the most monolithic. It is hard not to applaud the first principle of the White Paper — that "decisions about the supply of electricity should be driven by the needs of consumers". Hard, too, to argue with the logic of putting the area boards (the "retailers" of electricity) in the driving seat of an industry that has, perversely, been driven by the generators of power. Two cheers, then. But what, precisely, does this competitive regime mean in practice?

As far as the coal industry goes, it is clear enough: "generating companies will be free to purchase coal and other fuels from the most competitive sources". This is not good news for British Coal. International coal prices have been very depressed and, with new sources of coal becoming available all the time, show no sign of turning significantly upwards in the near future. While competition will not produce an immediate tidal wave of imports (if only because port facilities are limited), it will intensify the pressure already on British Coal to reduce prices and costs. The prospects for marginal mining areas are bleak. But this, Mr Parkinson might argue, is simply a reflection of economic reality. The competitive market in action: inexorable but fair.

If the chill wind of competition gives British Coal a bad cold, however, it threatens to be terminal for the infirm British nuclear industry. While the CEBG has a poor record overall in its construction of power stations, its AGR nuclear programme has been a disaster. Even if the new generation of Pressurised Water Reactors can be built to schedule (which would be a first for the British nuclear industry), their economics would remain marginal. No serious private investor would consider undertaking so large and risky a project for the low returns anticipated.

So farewell, then, nuclear power? Not quite. Suddenly, Mr Parkinson loses his interest in market forces. Instead, his paper identifies a "vital strategic need for the non-fossil-fuelled contribution that can only be made by nuclear power" (my emphasis). This it sets out to ensure

by selective protection.

First, the larger of the two fragments into which the CEBG is to be split will contain 70 per cent of present generating capacity, including all the nuclear stations. While this is big enough to bury the nuclear capacity for a while, competition and the profit motive might still be expected to call the nuclear bluff eventually. The White Paper therefore goes on to propose a statutory obligation on the distribution companies to "contract for a specified minimum proportion of non-fossil-fuelled capacity". While this could, in principle, embrace the Severn barrage scheme, it is clearly nuclear power that the government has in mind. Market forces and a legal duty to maintain supplies are not, apparently, considered sufficient to the task of guaranteeing the survival of the nuclear industry. Indeed, the White Paper makes no attempt to justify nuclear power economically.

The French connection

As well as setting some nasty problems in store for the future regulators, this special pleading for nuclear construction is particularly ironic in a document that proclaims that in future "generators will face real pressures to build plant efficiently". Doubly ironic, because it was precisely for massaging the figures to support its nuclear construction programme that the CEBG was reprimanded by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. It looks like further proof that the nuclear lobby inside Whitehall is indeed an unstoppable juggernaut, as Clive Ponting described it.

However, the White Paper may have put a time bomb under the industry. An almost throwaway line indicates that the "minimum proportion" could be contracted from any source — including Scotland and France. The "French connection" is particularly interesting. Nuclear power has everywhere been a child of government, not of markets, and the highly centralised French government/Electricité de France axis has proved

a formidable machine for building nuclear plant. Unfortunately for the French, electricity demand has proved harder to manipulate. EdF are therefore confronted with a spectacular — and still growing — over-capacity, as well as a mind-boggling long-term debt (around \$22 billion). France is Europe's biggest net exporter of electricity, and already has a link to the UK mainland. A suitably entrepreneurial regional board (particularly in the power-starved South) might be able to strike quite a bargain. Whether the other boards (and their consumers) would still be keen to bankroll Lord Marshall's nuclear ambitions is an open question.

So, will competition be good for the electricity consumer? Overall, the answer must be "yes", but it does not follow that all consumers will do well, and two particular sources of friction can be identified.

The first is regional. Power generation (particularly from coal) is virtually a Midlands monopoly. Most notably, there are very few power stations at all south of the Bristol Channel/Wash divide, and they are mainly expensive oil or nuclear stations. Under present arrangements, consumers in the South are not asked to pay the full cost of long-distance transmission — they are effectively subsidised by consumers in the Midlands and the North. When the area boards become jointly responsible for maintaining (and charging for access to) the transmission grid, they may well start to demand that the South pays its full share. Adding up transmission losses and the cost of maintaining the system, this might put four or five per cent on the cost of power in the South.

The second potential conflict arises from the threat that limited competition will create different rules for industrial and for domestic or commercial consumers. Direct deals are envisaged between generators and the larger industrial users, over the heads of the distribution boards. Domestic customers will remain dependent on the distribution companies. As the British Telecom/Mercury competition has already demonstrated, this provides an inbuilt incentive to distribute benefits towards industrial users, who can threaten to take their business elsewhere. Whether it loads an unfair share of costs onto the domestic sector will be another interesting question for the regulator to sort out. □

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DONALD TRELFOED, the *Observer* editor, made a popular speech last week. Drawing on his authority as editor of a great liberal newspaper, he told the clusters of diners at the Royal Television Society's annual feast that he thought facts were important and journalists should be free.

Naming no names, he said he had had a conversation with a very senior person in an institution which was understood to be the BBC; the VSP said something to the effect that: "I think there's too much information about now, Mr Trelford: weren't people all a lot happier when there was less of it?" The assembled took this to be Mr Duke Hussey, chair of the BBC Board of Governors, though it may not have been.

Trelford went on to say that he had been urged to speak out by BBC staff. Matters, he had been told, were not good. The assembled took this to be a reference to John Birt, deputy director general of the BBC, charged with improving its journalism — and it could scarcely have been anyone else. Trelford said that reporters should be free to get stories, producers free to follow their instincts and hunches, and that the penalty of centralisation was dullness. In a phrase which may haunt him when one of his own reporters gets a story round his neck and quotes it back to him, he said that "It is more important to be reasonable than to be right".

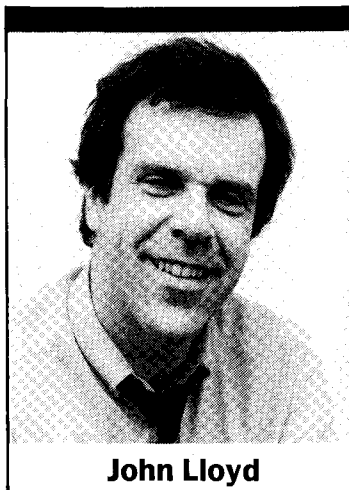
This was popular with most of the assembled because the widely articulated view in current affairs circles in general, and in the BBC most vehemently and viciously, is that Birt is a wreck. A memorandum circulated earlier this week, written by a group within BBC current affairs based at Lime Grove in West London, accuses him of being "dangerous" because he has a "theory" of how current affairs should be changed. Morale is routinely said to be "rock bottom". As Trelford put it in his RTS speech — he was frank in saying that he had been asked to speak in these terms by BBC journalists — "creativity thrives on confidence, which is easily undermined if programme makers feel a dead weight above them."

Panorama, the "flagship" current affairs programme, is presently the cockpit of the struggle. In one recent case, a *Panorama* on TV violence reported by Kate Adie — a symbolic figure, because of the attacks on her first-rate reporting from Libya by the then Conservative chairman Norman Tebbit — was nearly taken off the air by Samir Shah, head of current affairs and a Birt appointment: Shah thought it lacked coherence. In another, a programme on the European Commission's agricultural policy, the critique from Shah/Birt was that the focus on a few farmers and traders who were lining their pockets from the surplus was far too narrow at a time when the funding and political future of the Community was a matter of sustained and passionate debate.

The "dead weight" is charged with downgrading investigation in favour of safe and balanced analysis: of being careless of good and creative film-making by insisting on an over-intellectualised, rigid approach which screens out the real life stumbled upon during filming; of clumsy, insensitive management; of sucking up to powerful and conservative interest groups — like the Institute of Directors.

This view is now so successfully sliding into received wisdom that it should be challenged for that reason alone, if for none other. But there is also another reason to challenge it: it does not seem to me, on the evidence available, to be *true* —

STATE OF THE NATION



John Lloyd

Give Birt a chance

though, naturally, there are elements of truth in it.

As a *Weekend World* script would put it, to understand the crisis now raging about the figure of John Birt, you must look at the foundation stones of his belief. They are contained in a series of articles he co-wrote with Peter Jay in *The Times* in the autumn of 1975. These were the texts of the "Bias against understanding" and they read very well today.

Birt and Jay started from the assumption that citizens need to *know* if they are to be active participants in a political culture. However, they were not *permitted* to know what they needed because the dominant news medium, television, served them up news and current affairs with such a narrow focus that it amounted to a bias against their understanding the world.

“The uncovering of facts which embarrass may, in the broader picture, be less important than an analysis of issues”

News journalism, "devoting two minutes on successive nights to the latest unemployment figures or the state of the stock market with no time to put the story into context, gives the viewer no sense of how any of these problems relate to each other". Feature journalism was no better: its reports would "deal with a particular instance of famine rather than . . . the world food problem. They expose the dangers of particular nuclear reactors rather than examine what the government's energy policy is or could be". The theory (as Lime Grove would call it) did not hesitate to criticise "campaigning" or "investigative" journalism: it suffered from "an assumption . . . that a sore easily highlighted should be a sore easily removed."

Now, a dozen years on, one of the authors of this dangerous theory is in a position to make it flesh. And that is proving very difficult: difficult

to do and difficult to grasp from the outside (worse, it seems, *inside*). For some of the BBC's output already in part reflects the concerns of Birt/Jay: *Horizon*, *Money Programme*, *Omnibus* all had an approach broadly consonant with Birt's. Further, *Newsnight* is the kind of programme Birt/Jay envisaged back in 1975.

Second, the arrival of Birt coincided with the politicisation of BBC current affairs. Tory attacks on "left-wing bias" have produced a climate in which all change initiated by the new leadership is assumed to pander to the critics. Last Monday Granada's *World in Action* brought together these complaints in a programme which essentially charged that the BBC had lost its nerve.

Third, the central concerns of current affairs have widened since the Birt/Jay thesis. A powerful school of thought, to be found in the independent production companies, holds that the mass of viewers are bored with *both* the BBC *and* the ITV flagships, and is searching for a new style — both a mass appeal current affairs, possibly using the techniques of game shows and pop videos (ITV's *Network 7* is a foretaste of this), and a fragmentation of current affairs into programmes serving interest groups, a style which is seen most clearly on Channel Four. And last, of course, the new management at the BBC may have been genuinely bad at *management*.

FOR ALL THAT the central concern, as I take it, of the new approach is one which should, still, command support. It remains the case that a journalism which tries to describe the world by means of two minute bulletins, human interest film, studio gladiatorial and exposés will not serve a democracy as well as it should. It remains the case that many BBC programmes have not done the job they should have done, especially over the past eight or nine years: the job of explaining, analysing and bringing to bear a critical intelligence on the changes in our society and our polity. The *Panorama* programme "Maggie's Militants" not only relied on inadequate evidence about two right-wing MPs, it also failed because it assumed that "exposing" them could "explain" something important about modern conservatism.

There is a difficult line to draw here. The Birt "theories" *can* be co-opted for quietism: for a shrinking from hard journalism, from the discovery of facts that the powerful wish to conceal, the neglect of questions the powerful do not wish to be asked. Journalism of any kind has to be hard in that sense: but it also has to be able to admit within itself that the uncovering of facts which embarrass may, in the broader picture, be less important than an analysis of issues which are perfectly accessible but which are not properly explained. In the *Panorama* instance: of course we should know that farmers are fiddling the CAP. But in the pride of discovery, the fact should not be lost that the revelation may be less important to the citizenry than an understanding of the 150-page white paper which has come in the post.

In one sense, the anti-theorists of Lime Grove are right: the future of the struggle at the BBC will not be decided by a clash of ideologies, but by wars of attrition, bureaucratic charges and countercharges and, above all, money. But, in the resistance to Birt, no one has so far put up a coherent case against the *nature* of the change, nor one for the status quo. For the sake of an informed democracy, the cause he identified 12 years ago, Birt deserves to succeed. □

Voiceless in Gaza — and the US

*George Shultz's soft-shoe
shuttle around the Middle East
obscures the unchanging essentials
of Israeli and US "rejectionist"
policies towards the Palestinians.
In a major review of Israeli and
American opinion, NOAM CHOMSKY
argues that the first step towards
a settlement is to recognise the right
of the PLO to represent the
Palestinians and to continue to
press its peace moves*

APART FROM its scale, little that has happened in the weeks of the Palestinian "uprising" would surprise people who have attended to the behaviour of the occupying forces and the settlers for many years, not to speak of an earlier history that is little understood in the west. It is convenient to place the blame for atrocities on young Israeli soldiers out of control, often in a situation of turmoil and threat. But this is an evasion, just as in many other cases; the My Lai massacre, for example, when half-crazed GIs who saw every peasant as a potential enemy were condemned for vicious murder, but not the men who targeted B-52 raids on villages after having sent their troops to invade South Vietnam and destroy its society, rejecting opportunities for a political settlement in favour of repression and violence. Much the same is true in the present case.

A recent headline in the Israeli press quotes Aharon Yariv, director of the Institute for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University: "Continued Occupation of the Territories will lead to War" (*Yediot Ahronot*, 18 January). The "expected war", as it is sometimes described by the military command, will be "more severe and destructive than the Yom Kippur [October 1973] war", Yariv warned. He urged that Israel turn to negotiations for a "territorial compromise" as advocated by elements of the Labour coalition.

Such predictions have been made, and proven accurate, since shortly after the Israeli conquests of 1967. Writing on the matter 20 years ago, I quoted *Le Monde* correspondent Eric Rouleu, who predicted "the classic chain reaction — occupation, resistance, repression, more resistance", exactly what we have been seeing since, in an escalating cycle that has reached new levels of barbarism in the past weeks. Israeli journalist Victor Cygielman warned then that the predictable cycle "may succeed in ruining Israeli democracy", speaking of the demoralising effect of "such measures of collective punishment as the blowing up of houses, administrative arrests and deportation". Israeli Middle East specialist

Shimon Shamir added that "the spirit of [Israel's] citizen-army" would not be sustained if it is engaged "in frustrating the political demands of a large Arab population".

The dynamics of ethnic conflict under a repressive occupation have never been obscure. There is every reason to anticipate further escalation of the cycle, leading to new wars, including the prospect of superpower confrontation that has repeatedly threatened since the 1967 war, when "we damn near had war" after US naval vessels "turned around" a Soviet carrier in the Mediterranean that June, as US Defense Secretary Robert McNamara was later to recall.

Among the essential elements of the problem for many years are the "rejectionist" commitments of both major political groupings in Israel: Washington's firm support for the Israeli position, which is inspired not only by internal American politics, but also by the US government's determination to sustain Israel as a "strategic asset" in the region; and American political culture that has virtually excluded serious discussion of the issues and successfully marginalised the facts, while endorsing Israeli intransigence and reliance on force. The surface of events is sometimes recorded in the media, but nothing substantial will change as long as their meaning and causes remain obscured in the media and journals.

Self-determination

There are two contending groups that claim the right of national self-determination in the former Palestine: the indigenous population, and the Jewish immigrants who largely displaced them. In the west, the term "rejectionism" is restricted to those who deny such rights to the Jews. Abandoning this strictly racist usage, we will apply it as well to those who deny such rights to Palestinians. If we inspect the record honestly, we will find that for many years the US and Israel have led the rejectionist camp, barring a political settlement that has been within reach, though the prospects decline as the conflict intensifies on its predictable course.

US-Israeli rejectionism is so extreme that Palestinians are not even accorded the right to select their own representatives for eventual negotiations. As they have made clear in every possible way, in the occupied territories and the Palestinian diaspora, their chosen representative has been the PLO, which has no less legitimacy than the Zionist organisations of the late 1940s. If someone had denied Jews the right to be represented by those organisations in 1947, we would have spoken of a resurgence of Nazism; the principles are no different in the present case. The issue is not what we think about the PLO or the Zionist movement, but rather basic human rights.

Since shortly after the 1967 war, there has been a broad international consensus about a political settlement. This would restore borders that existed



The only voice left to them

before June 1967 with possible minor modifications and guarantees of territorial integrity and security. In the early period, this consensus offered nothing to the Palestinians, but since the mid-1970s it shifted to include a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Its essential terms are clear: "The inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine must be secured up to, and including, the establishment of their own state. It is essential to ensure the security and sovereignty of all states of the region, including those of Israel. These are the basic principles."

This formulation came from Leonid Brezhnev at the February 1981 Soviet Communist Party Congress, expressing consistent Soviet policy. It was endorsed unanimously at the following April's PLO National Council meeting. The international consensus includes the USSR, most of Europe, the non-aligned countries, the major Arab states and, since its terms shifted in the mid-1970s, the mainstream of the PLO. The US was even compelled to veto a UN Security Council Resolution in January 1976 calling for a settlement in these terms, introduced by Syria, Jordan and Egypt, openly backed by the PLO and in fact "prepared" by the PLO, according to Israel's President Chaim Herzog, then UN Ambassador.

Though largely suppressed in the United States, the facts are understood well enough by the victims. West Bank lawyer Raja Shehadeh, founder of Law in the Service of Man, observes that: "The failure of all peace initiatives made everybody here think that, 'We are absolutely desperate, we are exploited, we are harassed, our houses demolished and nothing is working to change our situation. There is no political solution, nobody [to help] from the outside and unless we do it ourselves, nobody is going to care'" (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 January). It is not so much the "level of brutality" of the occupying forces that has led to total desperation, he continues, but rather the "blindness and hatred towards Palestinian Arabs", the endless degradation that is a condition of daily life and will remain so long as the dominant regional power (Israel) and the United States, whose role is decisive, persist in their unflinching rejectionism.

Stay away from people's lives

Shehadeh looks back with some nostalgia to the days when Moshe Dayan's attitude prevailed: "to stay away from people's lives as much as possible" under an occupation intended to be permanent. From the internal record, we learn more about Dayan's views. In a September 1967 meeting of the secretariat of Rafi (later a segment of the Labour coalition), he argued for telling the Arabs: "We have no solution, and you shall continue to live like dogs, and whoever prefers — may leave . . ." To Shimon Peres's objection that Israel should preserve "its moral stand", Dayan answered: "Ben-Gurion said that anyone who approaches the Zionist problem in a moral aspect is not a Zionist."¹ The attitude of contempt for the Arab population is deeply rooted in Zionist thought. Recently released records of the Jewish Agency Executive reveal, for example, the thinking of Chaim Weizmann after the Balfour declaration of 1917: "With regard to the Arab question — the British told me that there are several hundred thousand negroes there but that this matter has no significance" (quoted by Arthur Ruppin).²

These attitudes have relevance for understanding what is happening today, as do their reflections in mainstream US circles. Thus

“If we inspect the record honestly we will find that for many years the US and Israel have barred a political settlement that has been within reach . . .”

the editors of the *New York Times*, deploring the current violence in the occupied territories, observe that: "As Israel suffers, so do its friends" (19 February). After expressing their admiration for "this tiny nation, symbol of human decency", and for "the way Israel society responds" as "brutalities are not covered up or ignored but exposed, investigated, agonised over", the editors praise those Israelis who "are pressing for more humane methods out of concern for the effects on the young soldiers . . . and in the belief that brutality inflames unrest. These guardians of humane values believe that Israel . . . can afford to take risks for peace". Other possible reasons for concern over brutal beatings, killings and general terror are unmentioned. We might ask what our reaction would be to a performance of this sort in *Pravda* if Jews were the victims and Arabs or Poles the perpetrators.

Expressing the stand of the establishment doves, Aharon Yariv calls for negotiations and "territorial compromise". But negotiations with whom, and what kind of compromise? The intended answer is: negotiations excluding the chosen representatives of the Palestinians, and a compromise that will leave Israel in effective control of the resources of the West Bank and much of its territory, while excluding the areas of heavy Arab population so as to avoid the problem of too many Arabs in a Jewish state. It has been a traditional view that Israeli democracy is not compromised if the proportion of the population who are second-class citizens by law and administrative practice does not pass 15 per cent; beyond this, the "demographic problem" arises.³

One form of acceptable "compromise" within the mainstream of Israeli politics is "territorial compromise" (the Allon plan of August 1967, which grants Israel about one third of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Golan Heights, and in its early version, north-east Sinai and a section of the Sinai leading to Sharm el-Sheikh). Another form is "functional compromise", the position of Shimon Peres. According to this, the territories remain under Israeli control while local authorities take charge of daily life and Jordan serves as their political representative.⁴ These are the positions of the Labour "doves". The Likud "hawks" call for extending Israeli sovereignty over the territories. For the Arab population, the difference between these varieties of rejectionism is not very great. In fact, there was a notable decline in repression, torture, deportation and collective punishment during the Begin years — and a return to these practices when Labour returned to power — apart from the 1981-82 period when Ariel Sharon and his associate Menahem Milson were in the ascendance, with brutal scenes not unlike those that have recently reached the world's television screens.

In the west, Abba Eban plays the role of quintessential dove. He calls for "an early end to the occupation regime" so that Israel can remain



Rex Features

“an exemplary democracy” (*Observer*, 7 February). He perceives that “it would take a Dante to give adequate literary expression to the intense concentration of dejection, bitterness and despair” in Gaza. But one should pay close attention to his recommendations. He cites Golda Meir and Yigal Allon — advocates of “territorial compromise” — as warning of the impossibility of permanent rule over “all the territories and population”, so that “new borders would have to be fixed *with Jordan*”. He observes that over a million Israelis voted in 1984 for Labour, which called for “the termination of Israeli rule” over the population of the West Bank and Gaza, “*most of whom* should be the citizens of a Jordanian-Palestinian state” (my emphases). Elsewhere he adds that Labour called for an end to settlement in “densely populated Arab areas in the heart of Judea, Samaria and Gaza that are not expected to remain under Israeli sovereignty . . .” and proposes that Israel “disengage from the tasks of ruling the densely populated Arab areas”, but only these.

The reality is that there is no substantial organised element in Israel, including Peace Now, that matches the willingness of the mainstream of the PLO to approach or accept the non-rejectionist international consensus.

Off the agenda

In the United States, these matters are off the agenda. The editors of the *New York Times* lament that “tragically, no one has an answer” to the problems of Gaza (20 December 1987). “Neither Egypt nor Jordan wants these Palestinians,” so they “have become solely the problem of Israel.” The idea that “these Palestinians” might themselves “have an answer” is not denied; it is irrelevant. In the second national journal, the editors write that the war goes on “in part because of a continuing Arab refusal to sit down and make peace” (*Washington Post*, 25 January 1988); make peace, that is, in the rejectionist terms acceptable to the US and Israel. In a 26 January letter to the *New York Times*, considered so important as to merit notice in the news columns, Irving Howe, Arthur Hertzberg, Henry Rosovsky and Michael Walzer write that Israel’s “strong-arm methods . . . strengthen the hand” of the Arab and Jewish “extremists” who “reject negotiations” and refuse a political settlement, neglecting to mention that the Arab extremists include Gadafy and the Rejection Front of the PLO, while the extremists on the other side include both major political groupings in Israel, both US political parties, the major US media — and, for many years, the writers of this letter.

Explaining his position after a widely-publicised telegram to President Herzog critical of Israel’s repressive tactics, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, a leading dove in the American Jewish community, says that “the responsibility for the Palestinians’ plight certainly is not primarily Israel’s. They are victims of the Arab governments and of the leaders of the PLO, who consistently have chosen terrorism and military confrontation over accommodation and political settlement” (*Los Angeles Times*, 25 January), a statement that is true only if we understand “accommodation and political settlement” to refer to the rejectionist demands of Israel and the US. Helena Cobban and Yagil Weinberg write in the *New York Times*

“The PLO has for years put forth “a moderated negotiating position”, often with considerable clarity, and they have found no politically significant partner in Israel or the US”

(17 January) of “recent signs that a moderated negotiating position may now be acceptable to the PLO”, but “the peace camp” in Israel “seems virtually paralysed”, as, in particular, does Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. In reality, these “signs” are not “recent” and go far beyond “signs”, and Peres, the leader of the “peace camp”, had only a few days earlier reiterated his unwavering stand that Israel “will not negotiate with the PLO because such negotiations would lead to the establishment of ‘a Palestinian state with a Palestinian army’” (*Boston Globe*, 13 January).

It is beyond doubt that the PLO (along with the major Arab states) has for years put forth “a moderated negotiating position” in the general terms of the international consensus, often with considerable clarity, and they have found no politically significant partner in Israel or the United States.

To maintain the requisite illusions, it is necessary to protect the American population from the facts. Brezhnev’s 1981 speech was excerpted in the *New York Times*, but without the crucial passages cited above; the PLO endorsement was not reported. When Yasser Arafat called for negotiations leading to mutual recognition in April-May 1984, the *Times* refused — not failed, *refused* — to report the fact. The *Times* again refused to report Arafat’s statement of 14 January that the PLO would “recognise Israel’s right to exist if it and the United States accept PLO participation in an international Middle-East peace conference” based on all UN resolutions, including UN 242 (AP, 15 January). The Hebrew press in Israel headlined Arafat’s statement that “I am ready for direct negotiations with Israel, but only as an equal among equals” and Shimon Peres’s statement that “the PLO is ready for direct negotiations with Israel without an international conference” (*Hadashot*, 7 January; *Ha’aretz*, 31 December 1987). The American public was spared knowledge of these facts.

A year earlier headlines in the Hebrew press read: “The PLO was ready for direct dealings with Israel.” It was explained further that this proposal was rejected by both political parties, because, as the director of the Israeli Prime Minister’s office explained, “If there is any hope of a settlement that will solve the problem, then the precondition is to destroy the PLO from its roots in this area: politically, psychologically, socially, economically, ideologically,” so that “no shred of influence remains . . .” The offer had been rejected by then Prime Minister Shimon Peres, because “it appeared to be a trick in an attempt to

develop direct contacts when we are not prepared for negotiations with any PLO elements” (Yossi Beilin, then government secretary: *Ma’ariv*, 5 December 1986; *Ha’aretz*, 19 December 1986).

None of this was reported in the US media. *Times* correspondent Thomas Friedman chose the occasion to report that the Peace Now movement has “never been more distressed” because of “the absence of any Arab negotiating partner” (10 December). A few months later, he quoted Shimon Peres as deploring the lack of a “peace movement among the Arab people” such as “we have among the Jewish people”, and saying that there can be no PLO participation in negotiations “as long as it is remaining a shooting organisation and refuses to negotiate” (27 March 1987).

The actual diplomatic record is, furthermore, largely ignored when the US media, and often scholars as well, review what they call “the peace process”, meaning the various proposals initiated by the United States over the years, all of them rejectionist to a greater or lesser degree. When President Herzog challenges American critics to produce a constructive proposal, saying that: “Not one of our critics so far has come forward with such an alternative” (*New York Times*, 27 January), he is essentially correct. Within the mainstream, the critics rarely come forward with the obvious non-rejectionist “alternative”, as expressed in the international consensus. Even the bare facts of the diplomatic record are unacceptable, hence suppressed, and their meaning is beyond discussion.

Peace: Israel’s record

Within Israel, the pattern was set in the 1967 to 1973 period, which Eban describes as “the most unattractive period in Israel’s national memory” (*Jerusalem Post*, 27 November 1987). The record for this period is reviewed in a study by Labour party functionary Yossi Beilin, relying on internal records.⁵ There was a secret offer transmitted via the US after a divided (11-10) cabinet decision of 19 June 1967, calling for a settlement at the international borders with Syria and Egypt (with Israel keeping Gaza), but no mention of Jordan and the West Bank. This proposal, which Eban calls “the most dramatic initiative that the government of Israel ever took before or since”, was cancelled a year later, when Israel proposed a settlement in terms of the Allon Plan (“territorial compromise”).

There appear to have been no subsequent Israeli initiatives, and Israel has forcefully rejected other proposals apart from the Camp David arrangements, which its government interpreted as granting it full control over the occupied territories.

As Beilin observes, security arguments were secondary throughout. Far more significant for the doves was the “demographic problem”, and the question of the water resources of the West Bank. Israel now depends on these heavily (as a recent study of the Washington Center for Strategic and International Studies concludes, the entire region faces an “alarming” and imminent problem of water shortages.⁶)

As for US policies since 1967, two alternatives were counterposed in the early years: Secretary of State William Rogers formulated a 1969 plan in the terms of the international consensus of the time, while Henry Kissinger preferred what he

called "stalemate". Matters came to a head in February 1971, when President Sadat of Egypt offered a full-scale peace treaty to Israel in the terms of the international consensus and the Rogers plan. It was rejected by Israel, with Kissinger's backing. Similar offers by Jordan apparently elicited no response. At about that time, Kissinger succeeded in his aim of displacing his major enemy on the world scene, William Rogers (the USSR was a distant second). Kissinger's opposition to a diplomatic settlement was a primary factor leading to the 1973 war.

After the war, Kissinger came to understand that Egypt could not be lightly dismissed, and that the major Arab deterrent must be excluded from the conflict if Israel were to be able to maintain regional hegemony as a US "strategic asset". This reassessment led him to accept Sadat's efforts to turn Egypt into a US client state and, ultimately, to the Camp David agreements, which laid the basis for Israel to proceed to integrate the occupied territories and attack its northern neighbour, now with US aid rising to a phenomenal level.

There were attempts to deviate from this pattern, notably in the early years of the Carter administration, but these were quickly beaten back, one major factor being the extraordinary support for Israeli power that dominated articulate opinion after the 1967 victory, an intriguing matter in itself. While some two thirds of the American population generally support establishment of a Palestinian state, there has been little articulation of this view in the mainstream, and the actual positions taken by the various actors in the drama, including the United States, are barely known and regularly misrepresented.

As long as this state of affairs continues, there will be no peace in the Middle East. For the present, the only feasible alternative is in the general terms of the international consensus. In my personal view, this is not the optimal settlement, but in the present circumstances it is the only alternative to intensifying conflict, and it might pave the way to further steps towards reconciliation and a more tolerable future for all concerned.

Israel can probably muster the force to suppress the current uprising, after which the world will once again look the other way as repression continues. The analysis that was valid 20 years ago remains so today. New uprisings will occur, perhaps more violent, eliciting a still harsher response. War remains a likely prospect, with the threat of global war not slight. As the conflict intensifies, with mounting bitterness and hatred on all sides, the prospects for a peaceful resolution will diminish. Western Europe could play a constructive role, but has refused to do so, and within the United States there are as yet few signs that the issues might enter the political arena, or even the arena of honest debate. ☐

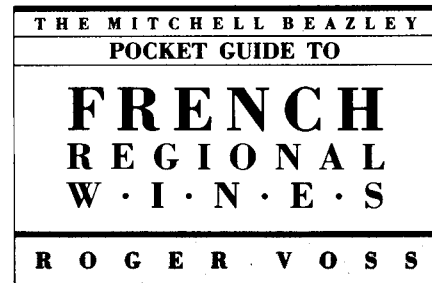
1. Yossi Beilin, *Mehiro shel Ihud* (Revivim, 1985), pp. 42-3.
2. Yosef Heller, *Bama'avak Lamdina* (Jerusalem, 1985), p. 140.
3. See Simha Flapan, *The Birth of Israel* (Pantheon, 1987), pp. 103-4.
4. For a review, see Amos Nevo, *Yediot Achronot*, 15 January 1988.
5. *Mehiro shel Ihud*.
6. Norman Kempster, *Los Angeles Times*, 23 January 1988.

The Chomsky Reader, published by *Serpent's Tail* and The Culture of Terrorism, published by *Zwan*, both by Noam Chomsky, will be reviewed next week.

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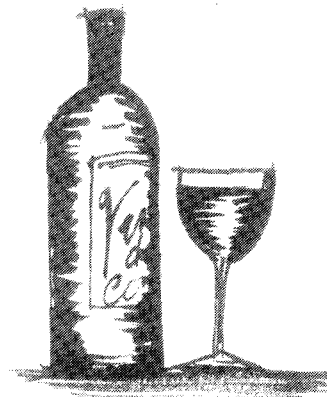
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Notes from underground

ALEXANDER COCKBURN *trails the Bolshevik heritage from President Reagan through radio shows to Harvey Goldberg*

New York

REAGAN'S EMERGENCE as a Leninist has caused some surprise and irritation in the capital. Lou Canon was interviewing him for the *Washington Post* last week and asked whether Gorbys was really and truly different from all the others. Ron said yes, that he'd met all the others (not true of course) and that what separated Michael Sergeyevich out from the pack was that he wanted to go back to first principles and extract the Leninist kernel from Stalin's perversions. Lenin, the president explained, had favoured auguries of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, "programmes that he called the new economics and things of that kind".

This drew howls of rage from a *Washington Post* editorialist a couple of days later, who felt it necessary to stamp out any possibility that the Leninist contagion would seep out from the White House and rouse the black masses sunk in political slumber in the south and eastern portions of the city. "From the start," the editorial said primly, "Lenin used force to take grain from peasants and sanctioned terror against 'class enemies' . . . 'Leninism', meaning above all single-party rule, was the foundation of Stalinism, and Leninism in the same sense underlies the reforms Mikhail Gorbachev champions now."

It's always interesting to see how frail the "engineers of consent" (Bernays' term for the mass media back in the 1920s) regard the American people's loyalty to the free enterprise system as being. The moment Gorbachev started saying that socialism and democracy were compatible, and that what the Soviet Union needed was a jolly good shake-up with lots of free speech, squads of pundits were rushed onto the nation's editorial pages and TV screens here to insist that capitalism works better than communism and it takes hours to buy a pork chop in Moscow. Sometimes this leads to startling, though unintended juxtapositions. When Shultz went to Moscow recently, the *New York Times* ran a lead story about his emphasis on respect for human rights in the Soviet Union being the indispensable backdrop for any ongoing entente. Five inches to the left, on the same front page, was a story about overcrowding in New York's lunatic asylums, in which things are now so bad that inmates are sometimes handcuffed to their wheelchairs "for days at a time".

Live souls

Gogol had his hero Chichikov turn dead souls into live ones, buying the names of serfs off the outdated rolls from their delighted owners and using them as collateral for his own advancement. Here they do it the other way round, declaring the living to be dead: a dead student movement, a dead labour movement, a dead left: a whole

decade trundled off to the graveyard with the label "yuppie years" tied to its toe.

These reports of a desolate political landscape are ludicrous. So powerful, though, is mainstream propaganda that very often activists end up believing in Dead Souls theory themselves. Last fall I sat in the office of a member of the political science faculty at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania. Out the window one could see the outlines of Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary. My student hosts talked of apathy on campus, but on interrogation they disclosed that they had organised a flourishing campaign to get the university's funds out of South African stocks, had an active Central American solidarity group and were squaring up to the oafish chairman of the board of trustees, a local supermarket tycoon who was trying to deny a professor tenure because of his political activism. The students had also established ties with the workers' local at International Paper, a company which has been engaged in lock-outs over the last few months.

Reaction's dark night

I listened to this account of energetic organising activity and said it didn't seem that Bucknell was sunk entirely in reaction's dark night. Later, as I was stepping to the rostrum to give a talk, a student rushed in to announce there was incredible news on the television. The market had dropped 508 points and it looked as though capitalism was kaput. There was a lusty bellow of applause from the crowd.

“As I was stepping to the rostrum, a student rushed in to announce there was incredible news on TV. The market had dropped 508 points and it looked like capitalism was kaput. There was a lusty bellow of applause from the crowd”

At the start of February some radical students at Rutgers, in New Jersey, put together a national student conference. About 700 turned up, a number which far outstripped their expectations. Most of the weekend saw political manoeuvring between factions from Berkeley, Rutgers and MIT, all of which imploded when black students pointed out truthfully enough that their own concerns were inadequately addressed and what was the moral and political underpinning for a self-styled "national student organisation" when only 30 or so out of 700 present were black? The whites said By God you're right and all broke up in conscience-stricken disorder.

But this was only a setback in the minds of those

wanting to see 1964, the Berkeley Free Speech Movement and SDS on instant replay. Anyone travelling round the country can see that common concerns link students on hundreds of campuses between San Francisco and Cambridge, Mass. The constants are: non-intervention in Central America, CIA recruiting on campus, divestment from South African stocks, racism.

Spooked out

The movement to stop the CIA recruiting on campus got a shot in the arm last year when the CIA announced an "Officer in Residence" programme in which some of its people would be openly installed as faculty members in the University of California at Santa Barbara, Harvard, Georgetown and Austin, Texas. By the start of November 1,000 students had rallied in Santa Barbara and CIA officer George Critton was lowering his profile sharply.

Around this time I happened to be visiting the University of Colorado at Boulder, tucked in under the first scarp of the Rockies, and got a good idea of how the anti-CIA movement had worked in one local instance.

In 1985 UC students, faculty and members of Boulder's substantial activist population formed Community in Action, with the aim of banning CIA recruitment on the campus and elsewhere in Boulder. Three major demonstrations culminated with one in November 1986, in which more than 100 police used mace and 16 people were arrested. Judge Roxanne Bailin ruled that the 16 could use the "choice of evils" defence (aka the necessity defence, which holds that to stop a major crime — e.g. CIA activities worldwide — it is legally defensible to commit a lesser one) and could call as witnesses Oliver North, General Singlaub, Richard Secord and other executives of Contra-gate vintage. Bailin also ruled that the Boulder District Attorney would have to pay half the costs of bringing these witnesses to testify. The DA in question, Alex Hunter, then declined to prosecute, citing the expense involved.

On 16 November 1987, the CIA was again set to recruit on the UC campus at Boulder, but in the end decided not to come. Kaye Howe, the vice-chancellor, said "I understand the CIA's decision to cancel was based on their desire to spare the university a continued escalation of confrontation and because they have fewer personnel needs this year." In other words the Community in Action group succeeded.

Responsible dissent

One important ingredient in this kind of political activity has been the group of former CIA officers now organised into the body somewhat nervously titled ARDIS—Agents for Responsible Dissent. They include John Stockwell, former CIA chief of operations in Angola, Ralph McGehee, David MacMichael, Philip Agee and other exiles from Langley. They do a great deal of speaking and usually make a powerful impact. It's one thing to read about the agency's knavery down the years and quite another to have someone like Stockwell

or Agee give detailed accounts of what they got up to.

There had been an early snowfall that time I visited Boulder. It was swirling over the wreck of a Continental Airlines jet when I landed. Driving down from Boulder to Denver the next morning the Rockies gleamed in sharp outline, a source of wonder and delight to the inhabitants of Denver since the city lives in a state of near-permanent atmospheric inversion, shrouded beneath a brown fog. To publicise my book *Corruptions of Empire* I was doing a day's worth of call-in shows and soon found myself sitting 20 stories up in a skyscraper across the table from Gary Tessler of KOA radio.

The amiable Tessler punched his telephone's buttons with increasing moodiness as the friendly calls poured in. "I wish we could get some right-wingers to denounce you," he sighed. "The thing is, Gary," I said on the air, "that your audience is made up of commies. I've just returned from the Soviet Union, charged by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party to award you with this pin, the order of Lenin, second class, in recognition of your organising work among the masses." I ceremonially pinned the little enamel head of Lenin, which I had in fact bought in Moscow, on Tessler's jacket and he laughed. We waited for a right-winger to call in. Later Tessler told me KOA was the station Alan Berg had been working for when he was murdered by the anti-semitic Nazi group, The Order.

A couple of nights later I was doing another radio show with a truly *echt* cro-mag host in the form of Morton Downey Jr, who has been busily carving a little name for himself in the national electronic culture as a throwback to the rabid talk show hosts of the High Cold War, like Joe Pine. (Pine, famed for his brutality and wooden leg, finally got his come-uppance when he had the young Paul Krassner on his TV show some time in the early 60s. "What makes a pimply-faced little squirt like you think he has anything to say," Pine snarled at Krassner by way of greeting. "Well, Joe, if we're getting into this kind of thing let me ask you a question," Krassner answered, "Do you unstrap your wooden leg when you make love to your wife?" Krassner recently told me he was trying to find the text of this famous exchange which was broadcast to many cities and finally found it in FBI transcripts entered in his dossier, which he secured under the Freedom of Information Act.)

Downey had Phil Agee on his Channel 5 New York TV show not so long ago. As Agee waited for the chat to begin Downey strode toward him, holding Agee's book *On The Run* aloft. This book, Downey thundered to the audience of carefully selected cave-folk, is the most disgusting piece of American trash I have ever read. He thereupon hurled the volume to the floor and it slithered in among the feet of the technicians. The audience roared. Later, as Agee was walking across the parking lot, one of the show's technicians walked up, said he thought Downey was a madman but he had to make a living and would Agee please sign this book. He produced the copy Downey had hurled aside.

My own radio exchange with Downey, conducted via satellite between Chicago and New York, was funny enough. We batted to and fro till the show was almost over, then Downey cleared his throat and said—quote from memory—"Now your father Claud, was he a radical, Alex?" This was clearly a trap in which Downey was waiting to pounce with factual data in case I pretended Claud

“I’ve heard that all Marxists are atheists. Are you an atheist, Alex?” I suppose the correct answer would have been a lot of talk about liberation theology but there was no time for that. “Yes, Mort”. “Thank you ve-rr-rr-y much, and good-bye,” Downey crowed, and cut the mike”

was only a couple of notches more radical than Prince Charles. "He was a Communist, Mort," I answered. "And you, Alex, are you a Marxist?" He who hesitates is lost. The careful answer would be, Well, Mort, there are portions of the early humanist Marx, of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, which I find profoundly stimulating, just as I find equally stimulating the work of Pascal, Descartes, Mill and other heirs to the Enlightenment, though I do of course repudiate the doctrinaire Marx of the Communist Manifesto and the notes on Wagner. "Yes, Mort," I answered. "And I've heard, Alex, that all Marxists are atheists," Downey ground on. "Are you an atheist, Alex?" I suppose the correct answer would have been a lot of talk about liberation theology but there was no time for that. "Yes, Mort." "Thank you ve-rr-rr-y much, and good-bye," Downey crowed, and cut the mike.

The bottom line

At the core of Downey's carefully crafted appeal is racism. He panders shamelessly to white prejudice and as always the prejudice is out there, ready to be inflamed. The last decade and a half, most particularly the Reagan years, have seen a consolidation of racist attitudes, rendered visible at their gothic extremity by a higher profile for the Klan, as well as some shameless harassment on campuses. Two weeks ago black students at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst had a peaceful sit-in which ended successfully when the Chancellor agreed to address their concerns as a matter of urgency. Elsewhere there is similar chafing by minority students. A good example can be found in Madison, Wisconsin, a place of irreproachably progressive reputation.

Last year a Madison police officer was suspended after being caught defacing a statue of a black woman and child in a public park. He was also charged with spray-painting "Niggers Suck" on a black-owned building. On campus the background to racist episodes may be evoked in some statistics. Out of 43,368 students at the University of Wisconsin in the fall of 1987, only 2,400 were from ethnic minorities. Of the 6,921 faculty there was a minority representation of 142. In the spring of 1987 the Phi Gamma fraternity, known as Fiji, was suspended for having held a blackface party, called "Fiji Island". Members had set up outside their frat house the figure of a black man with a bone through his nose. In the fall, after reinstatement, Fiji was again suspended after

fighting with another fraternity, one of whose members had been called "a fucking nigger". Simultaneously it came to light that in the spring of 1986 members of yet another fraternity had held a party where they had a "Harlem Room". Members had their faces painted black and served watermelon punch and fried chicken. To all of these assaults the black minority has reacted vigorously, forcing the administration to confront the situation. This contrasts with the attitude of a senior faculty member of Wadham, Oxford, who someone was telling me about recently. He reacted to the charge by a woman student of sexual harassment at the hands of a male professor by asking brusquely, "Well, did he rape you?" Receiving the answer, "No," he said, "Then you've nothing to complain about, have you?"

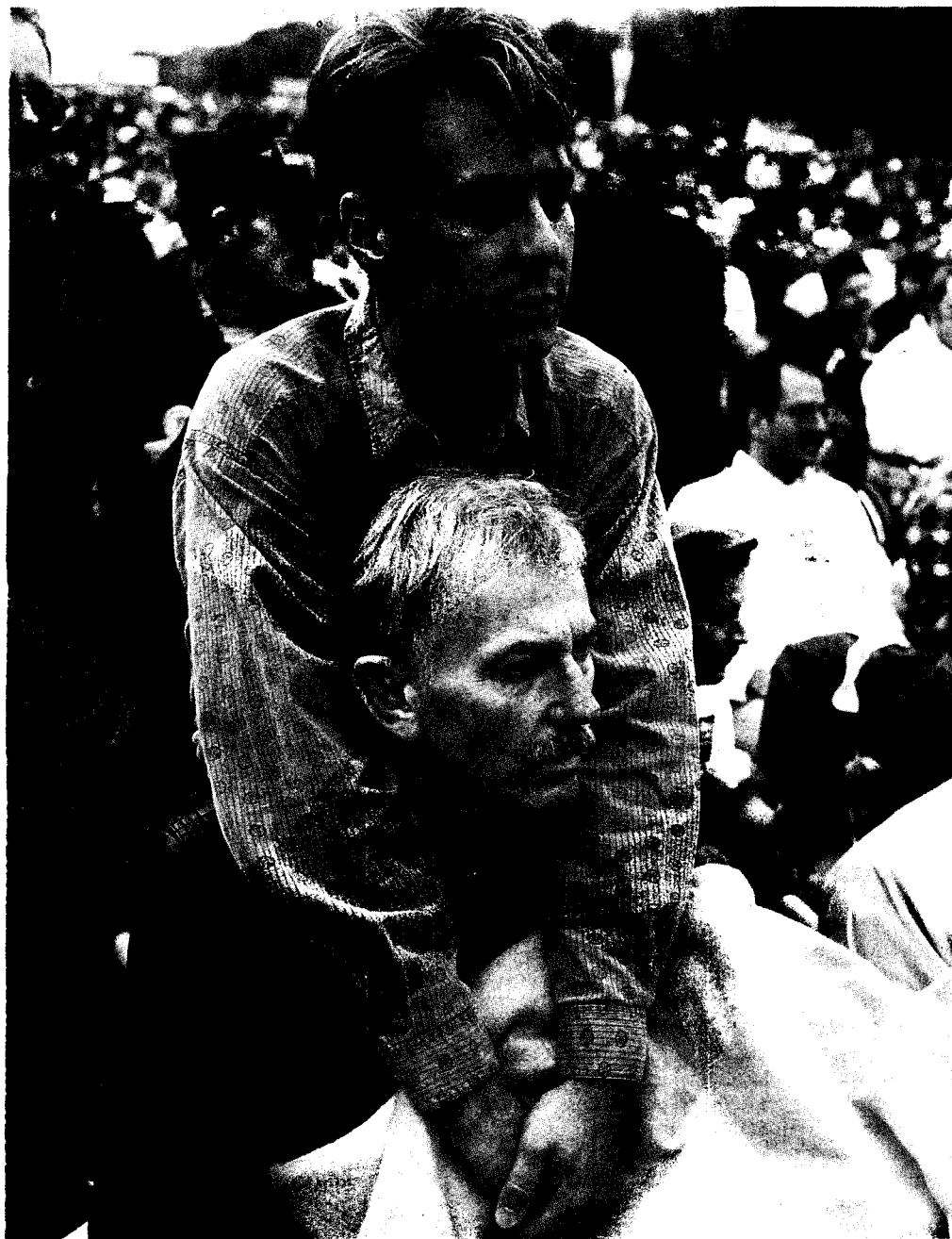
Great souls

But this memento of Madison would be incomplete without evoking a countervailing greatness and generosity in the soul of one of its most famous inhabitants. Replete with the saga of racist intolerance imparted to me in the course of a recent visit, I ended up in the evening in the large amphitheatre in which the late Harvey Goldberg had mesmerised and radicalised generations of students down the years. I've met people inspired by Goldberg's famous lectures and they all agree he was one of the great teachers of our time, therefore predictably unburdened by appropriate professional recognition from his colleagues at the University of Wisconsin. His lectures were theatrical events, inspirational happenings in which the topic was nominally history but in fact political life as it should be lived by moral beings.

Goldberg died at 65, on 20 May 1987 and some paragraphs of a letter he sent to a number of friends five weeks before his death evoke the spirit of the man: "My dear friend, let me say straightaway that I would love to see you; to embrace you heartily; and to plot and plan our next resistance to the Established and inhumane order. But here I am, conserving my waning energy by sending out multi-copied letters to a score of friends and comrades. I should go directly to the point, for any more mannered approach would obfuscate what should be perfectly clear. For five months I have been locked in a struggle with the fatal spread of cancer through my liver . . . the spread of cancer has been relentless, resistant to a variety of therapies. My calm remains perfect; no fear or remorse or self-pity. And why should it be otherwise? I have lived a life I immensely enjoyed, endowed with the comradeship of the likes of you. So why be too greedy. But to be sure, I am determined to try anything scientifically viable to reverse the very poor odds against my survival. I am as combative as in any struggle to prolong the months."

As he was wheeled from the surgery theatre Goldberg was exhorting the nurses to unionise and on his deathbed he closely followed the Iran-contra hearings, anxious, as the Madison *Capital Times* editorial obituary put it, "to see history in the making. To have seen the life of the mind lived with such passion is a lesson that will long outlive the body that held but could not sustain that mind." In his will Goldberg left a sum toward the founding of a centre to wage "the struggle against racism, bigotry, imperialism, and economic deprivation." Former students, colleagues or friends should direct cheques or enquiries to "The Harvey Goldberg Memorial Fund", 222 South Bedford Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703. □

Books



just because it was, at first, something that affected only other people — largely gay men. For years, silence prevailed in the US media and the US administration. When, after Rock Hudson's death, that silence ended, it was often replaced by stigmatisation.

Shilts chronicles some of the events in the years "before" Aids arrived in the collective western subconscious, conclusively to end some of the sexual joys and liberties of the '60s and '70s. The years "after", from 1983 on, are described as a diary of events in the lives of a cast of key characters, including Aids sufferers, the medical and research organisations and the gay communities of San Francisco and New York through which Aids began to ravage. The narrative perpetually contrasts the wilful inaction of the Reagan administration with the dawning realisation of medical researchers that tens or hundreds of thousands of men would die.

But Shilts also has his private agenda of blame for Aids, laid out in the book. Writing with the benefit of fully developed hindsight, his targets for ridicule include personal opponents of his in early 1980s debates over the closure of gay bath-houses in San Francisco. Debate raged for some years over whether or not the bath-houses, which were splendid palaces of 24-hours-a-day recreational sex, should be closed. On the one side stood civil libertarians, bath-house owners and gay activists; on the other were health officials, moralists and other gay activists — and Randy Shilts, the first full-time Aids reporter on a mainstream US newspaper, the San Francisco *Chronicle*, and himself a gay man.

Inevitably, in a history in which the narrator has also been a protagonist, Shilts' account seems partial and has attracted widespread criticism. In 1983, others have recounted, he was often jeered in the streets of San Francisco for the stances he took. These may have been right; but Shilts' current partisanship reflects at least a lack of grace, given that many of those who jeered may well now be dead or dying.

There is a lack of compassion, too, towards Aids sufferers, well displayed by Shilts' perspective on so-called "Aids-speak". This is the sort of terminology preferred by people with any disabilities (*not* "the disabled"), since the way language is used and the meaning it conveys is critical to wellbeing. Hence, it is proper to speak of *people* with Aids, not Aids *victims*. Shilts laughs at these distinctions and, in so doing, rebukes the almost unimaginable courage of some of the first people with Aids who were determined to go public with their disease.

The most serious criticism of Shilts' book concerns the credence he has lent to the alleged story of "Patient Zero". Promulgated as a result of Shilts' book, Patient Zero has now become a larger than life TV and media character, a metaphor for the archetypal promiscuous person whose endless sexual appetite supposedly started the Aids epidemic. Shilts doesn't quite say all of this — but he has said that Patient Zero, a French-Canadian called Gaetan Dugas, is "conceivably the man who brought the disease to the United

An end to the silence

This week sees the British publication of the first magnum opus on the history of Aids. San Francisco reporter Randy Shilts has sold a quarter million books as well as film and TV rights to his 600-page epic. It has overtaken Spycatcher in US bestseller lists. DUNCAN CAMPBELL describes the manifest harm, as well as significant good, that the book will do to the effort of fighting Aids in Britain

THE POLITICS OF AIDS continues to have much to do with blame. Blame the sexual libido of gay victims, blame drugs users for their immorality, blame Africans for their malnutrition, ill health and sore-ridden bodies. It's these, as any tabloid reader will know, that are the real reasons for Aids — and so those who suffer and may be ill have only themselves to blame.

In *And the Band Played On* (Penguin, £15.95 & £8.95) Randy Shilts does a superb job of placing much of the blame where it should really lie. Finding what did cause Aids, the advice that can prevent its spread, the research that might cure it: all these things were not done, or only done late,

States" and then spread it around.

This aspect of his book has received more attention than any other. It was the only part to be serialised in one magazine and it was the title and focus of the first TV programme to be made based on the book. Shilts assured that media attention would be focused in this way, by naming Dugas, describing his life, even his alleged thoughts at length Gaetan Dugas is discovered in sexual encounter after sexual encounter every few pages through the first half of the book, in order to set up the theory that, wherever he went, Aids followed.

Shilts, in a postword, claims that his book contains "no fictionalisation" of the life of Dugas or others. But it is particularly hard to see how the author believes he is reporting fact when he tells us that, on Thursday 27 November 1980, Dugas had a particular thought: Gaetan died in 1984, never having met Shilts, and a Dugas diary is not among Shilts' many references.

The idea of Gaetan Dugas as Patient Zero is based on early studies of how Aids first spread, called the "Cluster Study". This week, I interviewed scientists including the researcher on whose original reports Shilts relies for the Patient Zero hypothesis. The scientist, Bill Darrow of the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, specifically disavowed the validity of the assumptions used in his Cluster Study — assumptions which, in the book, Shilts uses to imply that Gaetan was almost single-handedly spreading the virus causing Aids.

The Cluster Study was not intended to define villains, but to show that a virus, rather than a poisoned product, was the likelier cause of Aids. Dugas appeared at the centre of the study because, according to researchers, he was co-operative, good at remembering and documenting his sexual relationships — and because he had Aids and, obviously, did infect some others.

Darrow's original report, repeatedly and prominently cited in the publicity for Shilts' book, found that 40 of the first 248 Aids patients in the USA had had sex with Dugas, or with someone who did. But Darrow himself now says that the study, although correct for its time, is now quite invalid. "We used an average of nine to 11 months for symptoms to appear after last sexual experience [with an infected person]," he said. But it is now known that the average period is more like eight years, and that major Aids symptoms usually take at least three to four years to appear.

Thus when Shilts, quoting Darrow's work, states that certain men had Aids illness nine or 13 months after sleeping with Dugas, the one thing that can be said with certainty is that they were *not* infected by Dugas. To continue to base the Patient Zero story on Darrow's 1982 research would be "misrepresenting science", Darrow said this week; adding:

Dugas probably wasn't the first person or the only person to carry the virus. I cannot give credence that he and he alone was responsible for taking Aids around America.

Both Dr Darrow and Dr Andrew Moss, a leading Aids epidemiologist at the University of California, San Francisco, pointed out that other Americans were infected with Aids before Dugas showed up. Dr Moss added, "To suggest that he is Patient Zero is nonsense. If you've got to choose

somebody, it wouldn't be him." Indeed, in the same month that *And the Band Played On* was published in the USA, a teenager who died in St Louis in 1969 was identified as America's possible first Aids case. The way Shilts had used the Dugas story was, said Moss, "a soap opera. It's a romantic construction that personifies the evil of the epidemic in an easy way."

Darrow also pleaded with Shilts not to quote Dugas' name in his book, fearing that the confidentiality of his Center would be distrusted and that the consequences for Dugas' friends and family, from depicting Gaetan as the evil Typhoid Mary of Aids, would be horrific. They were, and the family faced death threats.

In Britain, until this week, the Patient Zero story has been the only news from Shilts' book to reach newspapers and it has been used in a way which could destroy the rest of what Shilts is trying to say. When Princess Anne obliquely attacked Aids sufferers with asides about "self-inflicted injury" in opening the recent international Aids conference, and was criticised by charities and even the Health Education Authority, the *Daily Mail* shrilly trumpeted back to ask: "[Have they] not heard of the notorious French-Canadian airline steward . . . Patient Zero?" I asked Dr Darrow if he felt that Shilts had been reckless in his use of the reconstruction of Dugas' life — "You may have something there."

Overall, the book is written as though pre-packaged for a Dallasty film script, as the reader is forced endlessly to flit between moments of high

drama in divergent personal lives. With so much death, emotion and real trauma in both foreground and background, what happened next isn't really surprising. US network television is soon to start shooting a mini-series based on the book. Inevitably, one fears, the fictionalised life of Gaetan Dugas will find a prominent role in this series, which will be the first time US television viewers will have any glimpse of what living with Aids means.

The book is also partisan in that it is obviously the perspective of a gay man living in San Francisco. The problems of Aids and HIV infection for women, among drug users, poor blacks and elsewhere in the USA hardly get a look in. Worst of all, for no obvious reason, the main narrative stops dead in July 1985, with only a brief forward glimpse at the May 1987 Washington Aids conference.

And the Band Played On is nevertheless the first major means by which many in the "ordinary" world have been reached to hear of the hell that is Aids. Shilts too has shared in the awful and seemingly unending pain, having watched those he knew die. He is now watching three of his closest friends take their place in the inexorable progression of this terminal illness. His exposition of Reagan's lethal immobility does them sterling service; but his reckless promotion of the "Patient Zero" mythology has only helped make him wealthy, while prolonging the suffering and enhancing the prejudice and blame that has long fuelled the lethality of the Aids epidemic. □

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MACHO POLITICS

Hose 'em down

Lynne Segal

Inside Left: The Story So Far
DEREK HATTON *Bloomsbury* £3.95

INSIDE LEFT IS A RACY read, exciting for those to whom, like Derek Hatton, politics is a rough game of football. Will Derek and Militant United beat Neil and the Westminster Wanderers? Not this time, but don't miss the next great match. "Degsy" Hatton ends his book: "A chapter in my life has ended. A chapter in the battle for Socialism is over. But you can be sure of one thing: more chapters have yet to be written, and I have every intention of ensuring the name of Derek Hatton is in them."

The name of Derek Hatton should indeed go far. The man who hires Samantha Fox's agent for himself, who models for the *Sun*, who writes for the *Sunday Times*, who sets up his own PR firm and second-hand car business is a man most likely to succeed in Thatcher's Britain. The puzzle is: what's socialism got to do with it? What connects this man's personal pursuit of power with the history of socialism?

He is, his book reveals, a man who likes to view himself, as he likes to treat all others, as an object. The object that is him must be tirelessly promoted; the objects that are others are to be manoeuvred and manipulated for Hatton and his team. This man, who likes to be seen with expensive suits (Pierre Cardin), expensive cars (BMW's) and expensive women (the heiress Katie Baring), fits into my vision of socialism like a giraffe into a hose pipe.

There is only one thing of interest about Derek Hatton, a shallow, browbeating, braggart of a man, incapable of serious thought about anything at all: how did he get so far in the Labour Party? Is it really enough to blame the Militant machine? I don't think so.

Militant, Hatton explains, came to control Liverpool Council through its majority on the District Labour Party committee. This gave it the power to control policy and select or reject those who stood for council elections. Hatton boasts that he could "laugh in the face" of all opposition — such as that from the "so-called leader" of the Council, as he consistently and contemptuously refers to John Hamilton — because Militant controlled the DLP.

Hatton rightly points out, however, that this strategy was not unique to Militant; it merely took over the mould of politics shaped by the old Labour right and used by all other Labour Party "fix-it" men, adding to it a more tightly disciplined centralist organisation.

There is nothing new, either, in Hatton's and Militant's belief that their ends justified their means: "you have to be absolutely ruthless in order to take other people with you . . . I've been prepared to push people on one side and say 'Get on with it — I don't care a damn what you think'". (In a bizarre and horrific tale, Hatton tells us that he learned this lesson from the hard-headed

humour of a fireman hosing down the remains of a young woman student "pulped" to death in a road accident.) These are views which can be found more widely on the Trotskyist left (Militant provides only the most simple-minded version of them), in the Labour Party and in the wider labour movement. It is a type of bureaucratic authoritarian politics which has been forcefully challenged only by the libertarian left and by feminism, with their notions of participatory democracy and the empowering of all individuals to speak and listen to each other. Hatton and Militant think they know the answers to everything, and need listen to nobody. But so, too, have generations of men (and a few women) on the left.

Militant needed Derek Hatton and his attention-seeking flamboyance to counter its grey bureaucratic image; Hatton needed Militant for its back-room organisational skills. But they both needed the type of authoritarian, coercive, insensitive modes of masculinity which have dominated all mainstream political forums, silencing opposition and discouraging all but the aggressive and competitive from engaging in politics.

Militant power in Liverpool did a few good things and lot of bad things: it built many new houses (though the figures were always inflated) and created jobs in the process; but the social services that it delivered suffered badly and it was never prepared to consult with anybody. And, though housing was its overriding priority (to the detriment of all else), it was official policy, under Hatton and Tony Byrne, never to speak with tenants' or housing associations. (Ironically, we learn that Hatton, in younger days, had fought "an old Stalinist-type Labour authority" in support of the needs of homeless squatters.)

Hatton's top-down bureaucratic "socialism" is the very antithesis of the type of democratic services that Ken Livingstone and so many others tried to deliver at the GLC.

An ending

Gu Cheng trans. John Cayley

In the blink of an eye —
the landslide had come to a halt,
a heap of great men's skulls at the river's edge.

A schooner draped in mourning
passed slowly by
unfurling its darkened shroud.

How many graceful verdant trees
have had their trunks deformed by pain,
consoled by the tears of the brave and strong.

God buries the broken moon
in heavy mists —
already everything is ended.

Gu Cheng (b. 1956, Beijing) has been associated with the menglong ("misty", "obscure") group of poets, whose work contrasts sharply with the sentimentality and moralism of most Chinese poetry since 1949. John Cayley's translations have appeared in Agenda and other magazines.

There, money was provided for as many groups as possible to work out their chief priorities and seek the resources to meet them. But this is the politics of "the loony left", so contemptuously dismissed by Hatton for "their obsessions about anti-racist and anti-sexist issues". It is a politics which sees, where he cannot, that today nearly half the workforce is female, many are black, and that they, together with groups oppressed because of their sexual orientation, disability, etc., have little to gain from a "socialism" which defines itself simply through the needs of a white, male working class.

"What Militant says today," Hatton affirms — as though nothing has changed — "is very little different from the things which Keir Hardie said when he founded the Labour Party." He also quotes Julie Birchill to gloat that Militant contains "the only *men* in the Labour Party". Sadly, he is wrong. Hatton is not the only man in the Labour Party, and Militant not the only grouping, to believe that in politics there is "no place for the faint-hearted". Nor is this a book for the faint-hearted. Let's hope the next "chapter of socialism" is something more worthy of the name. □

Lynne Segal's Is the Future Female? is published by Virago.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Take another look

Liz Heron

CONSTANCE MARKIEVICZ was photographed leaving Kilmainham jail. There's no comparable record of Bernadette Devlin McAliskey's release from Armagh, because picture rights had been sold in advance to the *Daily Mirror*. That newspaper's "reduction of the north's stormy petrel to a page three female, so that her managers could pay off their election debts" is sorely regretted by Pat Murphy and Nell McCafferty in their introduction to *Women in Focus* (Attic Press, £9.95). Such reminders of how images are media-managed and otherwise constructed constantly affect our awareness of their book's 100-odd photographs — of trade unionists and community activists, politicians and artists, travelling women and mothers in blocks of flats, of Irish women in all 32 counties and in London.

What might be taken for a conventional photo celebration of change and achievement in Irish women's lives today adds up to something much bolder. It's the intelligence with which this book's been assembled that's striking. Murphy and McCafferty's text offers a critical commentary on the pictures and on Ireland's sexual politics, and fairly bristles with paradoxes. Perhaps the greatest of these is the vigour and tenacity of the women's movement in a country where women have a virtually mediaevel place in the statute book — the only country in the world where the fertilised egg is the legal equal of the woman carrying it inside her. And where the movement has been riven by the war in the North and the oppositions of pacifism and armed struggle.

The solid research that must have gone into

Diana Condell and Jean Liddiard's **Working for Victory: Images of Women in the First World War** (Routledge, £19.95) is repaid dramatically. Expanding the familiar female iconography of the war, these archive pictures supply precise and vivid insights into how it altered women's lives. Here are the protagonists in a host of newly created military and paramilitary women's organisations, and the practioners of new kinds of professional expertise (like physiotherapy). The Great War let women step into men's shoes, not just in munitions and transport but as gravediggers and chimney sweeps, coopers and tanners. It was also the first time in history that the camera was aimed in the interests of building a picture of national unity. The extent to which official photography cut across classes is overwhelming, but for many women working conditions were so ghastly that the requisite morale-boosting smiles just couldn't be raised. No doubt a lot of these photographs were thought insufficiently patriotic to serve their intended purpose at the time.

Former heroes of that war beg in a London street in **Edith Tudor Hart, The Eye of Conscience** (Dirk Nishen, £5.95). In these pictures, largely of Depression poverty and political activism in Vienna and London, Tudor Hart has left a major memorial to the politically committed photography of the 1930s. She was a Viennese socialist who lived in London after her marriage, was involved in Artists International, the Worker's Film and Photo League and other radical groupings. As a Bauhaus-influenced modernist she also aspired to show a better world than that of deprivation. Both the formal and the visionary concerns are particularly evident in her later photographs of children, some of which she did for *Picture Post*.

Such visions of a better post-war are among the legions of ghosts that haunt the landscapes of **A Green and Pleasant Land** (Cornerhouse, £8.95). John Davies' book has already been a major success and deservedly so. He's taken the landscape tradition and, with consummate technical skill, has used it to see what's there: the transfiguring marks of history beyond the potent myth of natural beauty undisturbed. This is a scenic Britain transformed over and over, by industrialisation and then by its gradual shut-down.

The ironies have many levels. First, the pellucid tones and spacious skies of Davies's prints, the breathtaking detachment of his panoramas, frequently shot from above, seem designed to school us in doubt. They hand us the pleasure of looking, then force us to notice that something's amiss, out of place or just invisible. The present meets the straggling relics of the past, the country betrays the pervasive signs of urban intrusion. *A Green and Pleasant Land* is filled with small mysteries that contemporary life gives us all the means to decipher. If only more photographers would ask us to be so clear-eyed.

Paul Trevor also asks us to look again and to ponder the state of the nation in **Constant Exposure** (Proper Pictures, £9.95), his clever and extremely funny commentary on the world as we live it through the television screen. Just as Davies has subverted and transformed the romanticism of "landscape", Trevor has created a new genre: the still photograph's equivalent of cannibalising

video art.

He cuts into the indiscriminate flow of TV to reproduce its absurdities and incongruities, and to invoke the mass saturation of the telematic cosmos, a mingling of icons and fairy tales, horror and hype, where the news gets confused with *Coronation Street* and is believed by many to be no more real. "This is a story of a voyage into a world where past and present, real and imaginary, intimate and strange exist side by side," he warns, and subtitles his book *A Love Story*, perhaps because he can't imagine how we'd live without that world. Certainly it's all-enveloping: an electronic looking-glass we've entered, getting so lost inside it that we keep forgetting we're there. *Constant Exposure* brings it to our notice with a jolt. □

PAPERBACKS

Great dictators

Paul Hallam

"WE HAND this woman Margaret Thatcher over to the Devil, that she might learn not to blaspheme . . . Oh God, in wrath take vengeance upon this wicked, treacherous, lying woman . . ." Paisley's terrible prayer, quoted in Clifford Smyth's **Ian Paisley: Voice of Protestant Ulster** (Scottish Academic Press, £7.50), might chill even her fiercest critics. Smyth, unfortunately, is a dull writer, his dry insider account of manoeuvrings

and fund-raising only coming to life when describing Paisley's campaign trails, the eerie night-time cavalcades through villages, forcing a response.

Smyth attempts an analysis of Paisley's style, the combination of 17th-century Scottish Presbyterian political theory with 20th-century fundamentalist revivalism. But curiously, give the title, few of Paisley's own words are quoted. A detailed account of a specific campaign like his "Save Ulster From Sodomy" or even the more understandable "Save Ulster From *It's A Knockout* On The Sabbath" might have helped. Smyth resists easy comparisons, but the ceremonies, the man of the people approach, the private armies, do have precedents . . .

The oxymoronic title **Hitler's Table-Talk** (Intro. Hugh Trevor-Roper, Oxford, £6.95) may raise a smile. But reading the Führer's wartime ramblings, often inflicted on guests after midnight, is like being trapped with the vilest pub bore. I jumped the loathsome, repetitive tirades on Jews and churches, in search of other obsessions, which I discovered include solid walls of soldiers, the exemplary record of the British in India, and above all cars and roads. One minute it's the courtesies — how to avoid splashing pedestrians in their Sunday best — the next, a manic vision of autobahns spreading the Reich across Europe. Ancient Romans, he declares, liked Germans, witness their fashion for blond hair. Baby boys are more intelligent than girls, you can tell by their weight. Bigger boys look best in leather shorts. We also learn that Hitler was only ever drunk once,

A TESTAMENT TO OUR TIMES

AND

POLITICS PEOPLE
AND THE
EPIDEMIC

AIDS

THE BAND
PLAYED ON

'Heartbreaking,
provocative,
it is a great book
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Newsweek

RANDY SHILTS

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that all that standing at Nuremberg was agony, and that marriage for him "would have been a disaster".

He'd probably have got round eventually to burning **Albiezer Coppe: Selected Writings** (Aporia Press, £2.95). When Coppe's *A Fiery Flying Roll* was published in 1649 it led to the author's imprisonment and contributed to the passing of severe censorship/anti-blasphemy laws. His prayer, that we "bow down to equality, or free community, that no more of your blood be spilt; that pride, arrogance, covetousness, malice, hypocrisy, self-seeking etc may live no longer" seems reasonable enough. His appeal for "parity, equality, community" is startlingly modern. Unnatural tyranny is condemned in Lear-like howls, but the Ranter's curses recall Paisley. Scabs for the arrogant, the "stretched-necked", a plague on the oppressor.

Edmund Murray's **Churchill's Bodyguard** (Star, £3.50) had the more appealing title *I Was Churchill's Bodyguard* in hardback. Murray is a good and faithful servant, recording everything with reverence, down to Churchill's belch when the two men met. But he has an unfortunate turn of phrase, offering "charming vignettes" of Churchill's life in his quest for "the real man". Winston handed maggots to visitors, royals not excepted, to feed to his fish. He once burnt his bottom on a hot tap getting out of the bath, and was known to forget his false teeth. He was inordinately fond of his budgie and addressed his wife as "Dear Cat". He wore a bib on his pyjama top to catch the cigar ash (he didn't wear pyjama bottoms). In his "twilight years" he palled up with Onassis, on whose much-visited yacht, Murray notes with interest, the barstool covers were made from the skin of whales' testicles.

Hitler declared "I never read a novel. That kind of reading annoys me." After this batch I was starting to feel the same about non-fiction. Francesca Duranti's novel **The House On Moon Lake** (Trans. Stephen Sartarelli, Fontana, £3.50) looked like gentle relief. But it turns out to be a chilling literary thriller, in which a bitter, self-pitying translator uncovers the manuscript of a German novel and paranoically beavers away to be its first translator. He cuts off from the rest of the world, "like an adolescent on rollerskates", and gets horribly trapped in the novel's own universe. This is an elegant, old-fashioned, well-wrought tale, an attack on modern greed and speed.

M. J. Fitzgerald takes more risks with her first novel **Concertina** (Picador, £2.99), veering from paragraph to paragraph between her heroine's beaker-hurling babyhood, her anorexic youth and a cancerous old age. There is much feminist punning of the sow/sew variety, an investigation into words like "slut" and "sloven". Men, often nameless, and a lesbian riding-instructress are the

villains. It's all a bit claustrophobic, the heroine is lump-like, a "mass being acted upon". An occasional eroticism redeems the book, and there's a powerful insistence on the necessity of "12-year-olds stripping in the greenhouse for each other", finding out about sex away from prying, prurient, destructive adults.

Unnerving heroes, autobahn types, are Peter Handke's speciality. **Across** (Trans. Ralph Manheim, Methuen, £3.95) is no exception. His Andreas Loser is a voyeur of the suburbs and the twilight, obsessed with thresholds, living above a supermarket, attentive to the freezers' hum and the motions of the spiders on his walls. He watches as workers return home and phone booths darken. The build-up of voyeuristic pleasure, "refreshing repetition", in this complex and riveting novel, is broken when Andreas finally acts. He kills a man daubing swastikas, symbols of "all melancholy, ill-humour and false laughter". □

FICTION

The in crowd

Victoria Radin

A Cannibal in Manhattan

TAMA JANOWITZ Picador £10.95

WHAT A FUNNY place Manhattan is, a sort of non-stop Punch and Judy show. New celebrities rise up every minute — only to be annihilated seconds later for possessing the very attributes which once made them interesting. Half the city is John Lennon, the other half Christopher Hinckley with a gun.

The news travels fast to London. Thus a British Sunday paper recently repeated the trashing of the writer Tama Janowitz, one-time protégé of Andy Warhol and newest loft-life good-time glamour girl. The reasons were, essentially, that she had already been rubbished by New York.

Janowitz's "new" novel — I suspect it is an old one, fished from the bottom drawer — is indeed not a patch on the collection of stories that made her a name. *Slaves of New York* was a series of vignettes on the downtown art scene which exposed all sorts of intellectual, cultural and sartorial pretensions with an unusual amount of warmth and good will. *A Cannibal in New York* shows a similar agreeable attitude towards the freak show, but lightness is lost as it goes to town on Janowitz's standard device of the innocent observer. Here, her modern Candide is Mgungu Yabba Mgungu, President-Elect of a South Sea Island that Janowitz names, after T.S. Eliot, New Burnt Norton (one of her better literary jokes). We first see this farmer cannibal with an American ball point pen through his nose and a three-foot long "penis gourd", living with his three wives, 13 children and 100 pigs. He narrates his story in a curiously formal American-English and the book is presented with photographs (of Janowitz and her friends) as an historical document. It is not actually racist but the satire sloppily slurps about on all sides.

Mgungu is brought to New York by a young heiress, a sketchily-drawn coke-sniffing Jewish

Princess, who marries him in a smart venue and then proceeds to get herself bumped off by a couple of cartoon sleazies who include an unfunny spoof on Truman Capote. Left on his own, Mgungu enjoys a brief season as a Bowery bum — his gourd is as nothing to the other tramps' fancy dress — before winding up in jail on a charge of eating his wife's remains.

He has done so, but not knowingly. Janowitz's central joke, which wears thin, is that her ex-cannibal is a good deal less of a savage than the unkindly, metaphorically people-eating folk who live in Manhattan. The flip side of this idea is a primitive who was *au fait* with American junk culture even before he arrived at Kennedy airport. But it goes a bit far when Mgungu reveals that he used to send photographs of his children, in starving poses, to the West in order to get money to play the commodities market.

Glib cynicism cancels out the jokes and there is simply too much knowingness: too many brand names, too many characters who feel like *clefts* to people who might be recognisable to about five other people in the East Village. It's Tom Wolfe's parochialism — that New York disease of mixed hubris and masochism — on a diminutive scale. Who cares to read another description of the sort of nightclub where you queue to imbibe amyl nitrate in lavatories? New York is a city of self-parody that even New Yorkers would be mad to take seriously.

The book is rescued by a high-spirited sympathy for its hero and the author's eye for sensuous detail: smells, colours and tastes. *Cannibal* reads like a film script: a cross between the exuberant corniness of *Crocodile Dundee* and the gloating paranoia of *After Hours*. Perhaps, if Janowitz has any friends left, it will be made into a movie, as is happening to *Slaves of New York*. As a novel, *Cannibal* is a private joke that should have stayed in the closet. □

FICTION

Last summer

Jon Savage

The Swimming Pool Library

ALAN HOLLINGHURST Chatto £11.95

THE SWIMMING POOL LIBRARY is set in an enclosed corner of the gay world, 1983. Within two pages we are reading that the summer of that year was "the last of its kind there ever was to be". 1983 was the year that Aids fully entered the consciousness, lives or bodies of English gay men and this event gives Hollinghurst's five-year-old narrative — as is deliberate — the sense of an age almost further in the past than the pastiche early 20th-century diaries that punctuate the book.

In fiction, the fundamental break presented by Aids — and its wider ramifications of oppression and suffering — has given rise to a quest for gay identity, humanity and continuity comparable to the self- and external analyses undergone since the early '80s by many gay people. Despite the fact that the over-signifying initials are not mentioned, *The Swimming Pool Library* is a part of this

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response, being a serious, critical yet partisan examination of one aspect of English gay life: its sex, its milieu, its sensibility and its history. As the virus telescopes time, all time becomes available.

It's easier to define a freedom or a pleasure once it is lost; the book's protagonist, William Beckwith, spends much of his time in an everlasting present of sex and sensation. The "swimming pool library" describes both his class and his eroticism, referring to his Winchester prefect's title and to his obsession with swimming pools. Much of the action is set in a public bath, the "Corinthian", where men soap themselves under the showers — and this is echoed in past time by a priapic Roman pavement in the house of octogenarian Lord Nantwich, Beckwith's alter-ego from a different generation whom he rescues from a heart-attack in a public lav and with whose biographical diaries he is toying.

This is a closed world, both of class and sex. No women appear in Beckwith's round of pleasure as he plunges head first into the almost unlimited delights available to his privilege. Some of the book is very sexy — in that the graphically described acts occur between recognisable, complex characters — but there are qualification clauses. Beckwith himself is revealed as shallow, shiftless and selfish: a narcissist capable of exploitation but not affection. Despite his intelligence, he is incapable of seeing the consequences of his actions or in thinking through the implications of his position, raised in "power and compromise". His best friend can only tell him what he thinks through a diary left for him to read. As the title hints, Beckwith is an emotional adolescent.

The book's apparent snobbery masks a sharp look at the English class system. The gay world's codes, its infinite subtleties, instant alliances and cruelties — the racist and ageist tendencies here described — are also part of the hostile world outside, just as gays aren't "separate" from society. This is made clear in a sequence where Beckwith is taken to Covent Garden by his grandfather: his gayness, although unstated between them, is both acknowledged and squashed by one single adjective. This is the subtle side of the oppression which Beckwith discovers is part of his own life as external reality begins to intrude. His attraction to "rough trade" is shown up when he is queer-bashed by a group of skinheads; his best friend is set up by a pretty policeman. And, as is finally revealed, it is his grandfather — the source of his private income — who imprisoned Nantwich in the 1950s for homosexuality in a fit of "bureaucratic sadism".

Within these layers, Hollingsworth loops discussions on Firkbank, the psychogeography of London and gay history. He writes with a trace of Orton — that "irresistible combination of elegance and crudity" — and with a sure eye on his own manipulations: he warns us against finding, like those who hark back to the days before liberalising legislation, the past "unbelievably sexy". *The Swimming Pool Library* is a pertinent, provocative book which, if anything, errs on the side of too much structure; at its curiously rushed conclusion, nothing is resolved. Despite "having that most oppressive of feelings — that some test was looming", Beckwith returns to his question mark of cruising. Does he, like that psychological pattern he embodies, pass through adolescence

into maturity? And which way did Lord Nantwich vote in the House of Lords on 1 February? □

FICTION

Another last summer

Gillian Wilce

Head of the Corner

GRACE INGOLDBY *Michael Joseph* £10.95

ON THE TIDAL island of Inishcara, off the west coast of Ireland, the Convent of St Dymphna houses, one rain-swept August: five nuns plus regular summer visitor Nona; "professional retreatant" Richard; young Australian Rachel; and Min, who fled into domestic service in the convent 17 years earlier and is now dying. On the mainland Joe Reihill tends his shop and bar while his daughter Eileen goes over to "do" for the nuns and Jim, the convent handyman, often drunk, sleeps here and there.

The telling moves from head to head of the non-professed characters, the nuns calm in the background, seen but not penetrated. While the voice is most often that of Nona (ironic, observant, narcissistic, fearful), it is also sometimes — a markedly unsentimental imaginative leap — that of dying Min, or of Richard (a 56-year-old little boy lost), of Jim (inarticulate but feeling) or Joe (anxious about the HP on his new till) or Eileen (frustrated, wanting, wondering, the only one — apart from Jim — who still talks to Min properly) but seldom that of Rachel whose confidence in everything from God to the joys of half-naked sun-bathing is mostly seen through Nona's eyes. Yet the voice is also the author's: sardonic and lyrical, witty and elegaic. It makes this short novel both rich and elusive. The riskiness of the style leads to the occasional stumble, unnecessary assonance, repetition or jokiness, but is by and large vividly effective.

There are constant flashes of amusingly acute observation: two nuns, for instance, passing years in an opening-and-shutting-windows war, each self-mortifyingly insisting on the opposite of what she actually likes, or Nona reflecting on how a "man like Richard could spend so much time with a girl who got over-excited by a chive".

From the start it is evident that, however stable past summers may have seemed, disintegration is setting in, calling that past into question. Rachel not only makes innovations in convent routine but annexes Richard, on whose friendship Nona has privately depended. The dying Min is no longer interested in Nona's stories of life with the BBC World Service. The convent itself is coming to an end. The word "end" echoes more and more in Nona's head. While others may talk of new beginnings, for her Min's dying is a stone handed on and God a "blank gap and space" in the kitchen. The idea of God hovers around the novel but mostly, there being little entry into the heads of those who may believe, as a hope being swallowed up in doubt and emptiness.

The one shaft of clear light is the memory in Min and Jim's heads of their secret love, reminiscent of Larkin's "Wedding Wind" in its evocation of joy

clothed in few words but incarnated in the clean, fierce buffeting of the wind. Somewhere here may be that stone of the book's title, the one which the builders rejected, though it isn't altogether obvious.

The book lacks, in the end, a strong vision to unify its tones of voice, emerges as slightly less than the sum of its excellent parts. The very beginning and the very end don't quite work to draw it together. Precisely because of the novel's hints of religious significance, its touches of tragic intensity along with its wit, the want of a committed authorial perspective actually lessens its final impact. However, this is only to say that Grace Ingoldby, who already writes most entertainingly and imaginatively, may write an even bigger novel. □

DEMOCRACY

Avanti

Bob Lumley

Which Socialism?

NORBERTO BOBBIO trans. ROGER GRIFFIN ed.
RICHARD BELLAMY *Polity* £25

"ONLY PEOPLE who have kneeled before an idol feel the need to smash it to the ground once they rise to their feet. Someone who has never waved the banner inscribed with the words: 'Marx is all, nothing outside Marx, nothing against Marx' has no impulse to join the chorus of rebel subjects."

Norberto Bobbio makes no apologies. He is a traditional intellectual. A professor of Political Philosophy and Jurisprudence, he says he regards Marx as a "classic" to be read alongside Aristotle, Hobbes and Weber. Yet he admits to succumbing to the fascination of Marx's work "especially in the years of Italy's liberation", and his involvement in debates on Marxism has never been drily scholastic. He himself is currently a senator close to the Italian Socialist Party, and, when not in debate with Communist Party intellectuals, he's been challenging the political theories of the far left in Italy, which has included not only his students but his sons.

Which Socialism? is the "companion volume" to Bobbio's *The Future of Democracy* (Polity) and is likewise scrupulously edited and translated by Richard Bellamy and Roger Griffin. It consists of essays which concentrate on interrogating Marx's legacy in the field of political theory. The first half of the book was previously in the collection *Quale Socialismo?* of 1976, while the other essays date from the late '70s.

The dates are not irrelevant. Bobbio clearly sees

NEW STATESMAN BINDERS

We apologise to readers who are waiting to receive *New Statesman* binders they ordered some time ago. The delay has been caused by manufacturing problems at our suppliers. All orders will be despatched as soon as new stocks reach us — no later, we hope, than mid-March.

his role as an independent and anti-conformist thinker. In the earlier period, the political and intellectual tide was flowing in the direction of extraparlimentary leftism and structuralist Marxism. For Bobbio, both were variants of a new Marxist dogmatism, whose certainties he mercilessly quizzed, as the question-mark of the book title indicates. Bobbio was especially concerned at the way Marxism dismissed other intellectual traditions via appeals to sacred texts and failed to examine the world outside itself. Furthermore, he saw Marxism as dodging the problems of democracy.

While Bobbio takes issue with his contemporaries (the excellent introduction sets the stage for readers unfamiliar with Italian politics), he seeks to point out the inadequacies in Marx's own work: his illusions about the withering away of the state, his contempt for the legality of the democratic state, his intolerance towards other thinkers, his subjection of means to ends. For Bobbio Marx never really developed an analysis of politics that wasn't a critique, nor did he do much thinking about the political system designed to replace the existing capitalist order. He shared in the illusion that politics sprang entirely from divergent class interests, and that, with socialism, the government of men would be replaced by the administration of things. However, as Bobbio argues, the constraints of time, information and scale mean that politics is a condition of human life whatever the economic system. Moreover, conflicts arise not only over divergent interests but over genuine ethical differences.

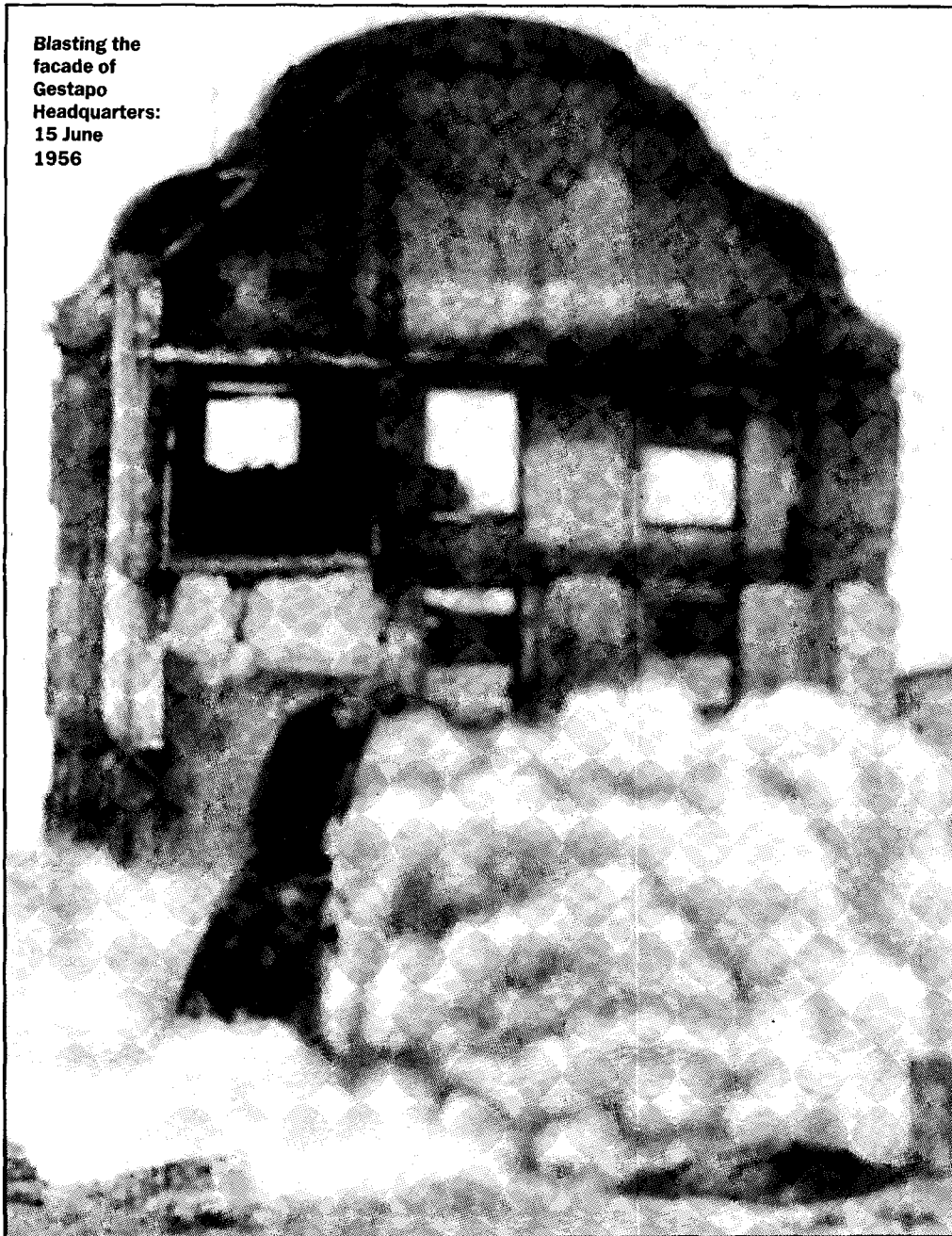
Above all, Bobbio exposes the inconsistencies of those who aspire to combine democracy and socialism. One target is Lucio Colletti, who wrote that socialism couldn't exist without civil and political liberties, and yet could do without parliamentary institutions. How, asks Bobbio, are these liberties to be safeguarded without a body that generates the democratic rules of the game? Another target are those who advocated in the post-'68 period "direct democracy" as an alternative to representative forms. Bobbio is not against such participation as a secondary form, but sees the refusal to believe that there are "problems relating to the citizen distinct to those regarding the worker" as a dangerous illusion.

It would be a mistake, however, to view Bobbio as an essentially conservative thinker. In a way, he sees the movements of the '70s as not sufficiently radical because not sufficiently democratic. He favoured extending decision-making to new areas, such as schools, the army and the workplace, but is adamant that sloganising is no substitute for thinking about what notions such as revocable mandates mean in practice. Moreover, Bobbio's response to the "crisis of Marxism" has been to counterpose History to Fashion: "Everybody will remember that the great Croce had the misfortune to write in 1938 a famous essay in which he reviewed the history of the forty previous years under the title: 'How theoretical Marxism was born and died in Italy'. Since then Marxism has come back from the dead at least three or four times."

It is unfortunate that *Which Socialism?* didn't come out a decade earlier. Nevertheless, Bobbio's intelligence and clarity hold their own and this publication can only enhance his growing reputation. □

ARTS

Blasting the facade of Gestapo Headquarters: 15 June 1956



Lest we remember

In arbitrary fashion, Berlin has just marked its 750th birthday — with an equally arbitrary exhibition, the Internationale Bauausstellung, of new building, restoration work and plans. What does emerge clearly, writes JULES LUBBOCK, is the city's desperate determination to keep re-constructing its past

BERLIN WAS FIRST documented in 1237, but of course the city is much older. Unless you were aware of this fact, however, you would never believe that Berlin had *once* been a mediaeval city: no other European city has so thoroughly exterminated the monuments of its past.

All was swept away in the Enlightenment fervour of the Hohenzollern Kings of Prussia, the future Kaisers, abetted by their neo-classical architects, Gilly and Schinkel. Barely the line of a street and no more than a couple of Gothic spires survive. Berlin, the "world capital", Rome and Athens reborn as one, was the first modernist city whose ruthless planners burnt the map of the past.

And the habit seems to have stuck. When I was in Berlin for the **Internationale Bauausstellung** and crossed the Wall to the East — which contains the government centre of the pre-war capital on its erased mediaeval site — I searched out the few surviving mediaeval houses clustered around the Nikolaikirche. Very charming they were, too, with their wrought-iron shop signs, gabled roofs and cosy coffee houses — but, in a photograph of the area after its post-war reconstruction, they *were not there*; the area was grassed over. I assumed that they had been destroyed in the war and subsequently rebuilt, as in Warsaw. But no: back in the West, a friend remembered seeing them standing and inhabited in the 1950s. They had actually survived the war, only to be eradicated by the modernist planners in the 1960s. And now East Berlin has rebuilt them from scratch as its contribution to the anniversary.

I find so cavalier an approach to history profoundly disturbing, especially in the capital of the very nation that created modern scientific history, the city whose indwelling spirit must be Hegel. The bust of this inventor of the *Zeitgeist* stands on an unobtrusive pedestal in a quiet spot between the university where he taught and the Pergamon Museum, whose own contribution to Hegelian universal history are those monumental examples of stolen cultural property: the Pergamon Temple from Turkey and the gates of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon.

There is a still more sinister aspect. Just within the Western sector, the headquarters of the Gestapo, although badly gutted, also survived the war. By 1956 all trace of them had been quietly — and not accidentally — erased, along with their historical associations. Now, one of the initiatives of the *Bauausstellung* has been to excavate the torture cellars and to hold in them a commemorative exhibition, *The Topography of Terror*. Close by, on a concrete floor, lie wreaths, dismally withered, protected by a simple shed — mercifully “undesigned”.

Bauausstellungen have been common in Germany this century. In 1957 West Berlin had modernists like Gropius to design a model high-rise housing estate for Interbau. (In this city of the north German plain the results are peculiarly soul-destroying.) In contrast, the principle of the current *Bauausstellung* is to build (*Neubau*) and to rehabilitate (*Altbau*) in accordance with the rules of the historical city — ironically, the very rules which had themselves obliterated the mediaeval city beneath a grid.

There is little architectural flash in the results. Behind a restored 19th-century Renaissance facade to working-class tenements, the stucco courtyards have been washed a pale yellow — which gives a feeling of sun to this city of mists. The Turkish community has won a measure of control. Close to Axel Springer's *Die Welt* office slab, built to confront the East across the Wall but which in fact only echoes its cousins on the other side — modern architecture knew no boundaries — five-storey housing has been built round garden courtyards in the traditional way. But the concrete is already spalling, the mastic seals of the precast sections are already being replaced, residents have pinned their complaints about heating costs to the IBA information boards. What is the point of building traditional dwellings in precast concrete?

In a city of mists there is need for strong colour

and clear form — well understood in the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment, as well as by Mies van der Rohe, Schinkel's heir, whose one-storey temple of the arts in black steel is a rare great building of the 1960s. Of the *Bauausstellung* celebrities, the Italian Aldo Rossi is best, with his vast corner block in red brick with yellow courses and pea-green steel lintels over the windows. It is simple, repetitive and unpretentious, like a Victorian tenement or warehouse, only not so good. And it too works in the mist.

Aldo Rossi's work is currently on show at the RIBA in Portland Place (until 29 March). Most interesting is a corner building in Turin, also a grid city: five storeys in red brick, white marble, green lintels, dormers and a sliced-off corner marked by a pair of giant Tuscan columns. Here is an object lesson in the discipline of composition and adornment in the patterned and polychromatic proportionality of brick to window, window to wall, wall to building and building to the city plan. The pattern of brickwork and masonry must be the basis of all ornamental enrichment.

Rossi believes that each city has an individuality based on its history, that builders must be governed by the building rules and codes which have shaped it. Even the layout of his exhibition is exemplary in the arrangement of the thick freestanding screens to accord with the nave-and-aisles form of the exhibition hall itself — quite different from a previous show by an aptly named hi-tech architect, Grimshaw, which adopted the *tabula rasa* approach. The lessons, therefore, of neo-classical Berlin or of Italian cities cannot be directly translated into British cities, which lack the classical continuity of Italy or the ruthless Cartesian modernism of Berlin. We have few grids; our streets and our building styles are mixed, gothic and classical; our cities have grown outwards, each increment according to different rules; the mediaeval centre, the Georgian extensions, the bye-law housing, the picturesque suburbs. The code of each has to be respected. To recognise the problem is to make a start. □

POP

Big bangs

Simon Reynolds

THIS MONTH, by way of a prologue, let me start by paying tribute to a tribute, **Psychotic Reactions and Carburettor Dung** (Knopf, £14.95 import; Heinemann, July, £9.95), a selection from the rock writing of the late, legendary Lester Bangs, edited by the equally great Greil Marcus. Bangs more or less originated that style of alcohol, amphetamine and God-knows-what-else fuelled raving/ranting that has subsequently proved so influential on critics (for better or worse), especially in America, where exuberance is generally rated higher than elegance. But more interesting is the extraordinary prescience of the man: as he says in one piece in the book, when he's been thrown in jail for disturbing the peace with his Coltrane records and his cell-mate asks what he's in for — “being ahead of my time”.

In 1970, against the backdrop of progressive rock's florid conceits and singer-songwriter pensiveness, completely against the grain of his

era, Bangs was already using the term “punk rock” to celebrate the Velvet Underground and Lou Reed, The Stooges and Iggy Pop, MC5 and forgotten '60s garage bands like Question Mark and the Mysterians. (Later would come Beefheart, Suicide, The Ramones, Richard Hell, No Wave.) He was elaborating a set of interconnected ideas — the liberating power of incompetence and “crude” repetition; self-destruction, both literal and metaphoric; the trash aesthetic; the notion that there's a certain level of teen-rock primitivism that actually, unintentionally, meets up with the furthest reaches of free jazz and avant-garde noise.

Since then, Bangs' aesthetic universe has, for a whole strand of rockists, been installed as The Way and The Truth — from the adepts of “sickness” in the early part of this decade right up to today's “acolytes of obliteration”, me included. (Chastening to discover that many of your most cherished notions had been anticipated 15 years before you started writing.)

The Bangs approach has become a kind of urban folk tradition. The hip NY group **Pussy Galore** — with its combination of guitar extortion, the stiff thrash-beat of '60s punk and callow statements of arbitrary, near-psychotic petulance (“Really Suck”) — could almost be a Lester Bangs hallucination of the perfect band. And the *Village Voice* critics who drool over them, Bangs-casualties to a man, have even invented a classic Bangs neologism for what Pussy Galore and their ilk do — “pigfuck”.

Another NY band dedicated to puerility as a way of life are **Sonic Youth**. Their *Master-Dik* EP (Blast First) is closer to the output of their alter-ego-combo **Ciccone Youth** — inept hip hop beats and turbid riffery — than their usual hybrid of Stooges attitude and atonal “reinvention of the guitar”. In Ciccone Youth they vandalised Madonna's “Into The Groove” — an act of revenge on a Pop that's grown up and left our little world trailing behind impotent — and it's this spirit of minor, but salutary delinquency that informs the second side of the EP: fragments of cover versions, random scraps of noise and other garbled, off-the-cuff stuff that I'd call “doodling” if the word wasn't too leisurely and un-maniac.

It seems to me that the pursuit of primitivism and puerility is actually more “sophisticated” than the current notion of post-rock good taste that prevails, particularly in the metropolis. For me the final bankruptcy of this deference to the time-honoured and vintage comes with the crossover success of the Nina Simone record (for a long time, *the* clubland secret) and with the fad for “rare groove” (i.e. all the substandard street-funk that was too mediocre to make it in the early '70s). It's increasingly the fact that being “adolescent” (restless and insatiable) is an over-20, even *postgraduate* activity. The real “teenyboppers” aspire to be suave and monied, which is why the charts are full of smooth operators, or rereleases that appeal to people's desire to be “discriminating”.

In comparison with the Americans, British bands are still too mannered and meticulously attentive to the period detail of bygone teen mania to live up to the Bangs lineage (the Jesus and Mary Chain and their Velvets/Stones fixation, Loop with their Detroit '69 haircuts). But I think Lester

would have flipped over Ladbrooke Grove's **World Domination Enterprises**. Their new single, a cover of LL Cool J's paean to the ghetto blaster's anti-social pleasures, "I Can't Live Without My Radio" (Product Inc) combines hip hop bolshiness with an avant-rock spree of filthy noise. The most widely-aired mix is slightly overdetermined by hip hop, by rather generic samples deployed by an overbearing but not especially endowed producer (though one of the more grisly samples, lifted from a Public Enemy track, fits superbly) and the best version is still the original, now snuck away on the B-side of the 7 inch, where real drums impersonate the inelastic rigour of the Roland 808 drum machine and scraped bass strings provide a gruesome ersatz for scratching.

W.D.E.'s forthcoming masterpiece LP will round out the picture, showing that the band are the staggering culmination of 20 years' forays into noise and dementia. Keith Dobson (singer, astounding guitarist, and Dominator in chief) has listened and learnt to PIL's dub-noise adventures, the bacchanalia/deep blues of Beefheart and The Birthday Party, and the post-punk incompetents. World Domination Enterprises are a band of fascinating contradictions: their ecological rant "Asbestos Lead Asbestos" rubs up against the penchant for demolition derbies expressed in "Hotsy Girl". Their squatterland "politics" is closer to their buddies Mutoid Waste Company's autonomist opportunism and parasitic survival-through-adaption, than anything programmatic and concerned.

The ghetto is the over-riding theme, expressed in Ballardian car-wreck rockabilly, ruinous blues, the tribulation and main street exile of dub, and even in a cover of Lipps Inc's "Funkytown" — "got to make a move/to a town that's right for me" — all liberally doused with gratuitous violence. The desire for kicks rubs up against dead ends so oppressive, so claustrophobic, the result is a kamikaze catharsis, a devastating, Pyrrhic release in which the carnal and carnage are elided. Be consumed by it. □

CINEMA

Feudal gestures

Georgina Born

The Last Emperor (15)
Odeon Leicester Square

A STATION in Manchuria, 1950; a team is painting socialist realist murals on the walls. Dishevelled, en route to prison for the crimes of traitor, collaborator and counter-revolutionary, the deposed last emperor of China, Pu Yi, is recognised by some people who fall to the floor "kow-towing" to him. Others, aware of the dangers of such obeisance, rush to pull them up. Pu Yi slips into a side room and slits his wrists.

Bertolucci's latest film begins with this poignant evocation of Pu Yi's impotence, of "benign" power turned destructive so that his very symbolic existence endangers those whom he has imagined that he should protect. Pu Yi is saved from suicide because the Maoist state wants to rehabilitate him.



Saccharine innocence or despotism? Wu Tao as the young Pu Yi

But, as prisoner Number 901, he stubbornly refuses to accept their terms: "I wanted reforms . . ." "What did you want to reform?" "Everything."

The Last Emperor is based on the autobiography of Pu Yi, who came to power aged three in 1908 and died a simple gardener and good citizen of Mao's China in 1967. Behind this life story pass the resounding events of Chinese 20th-century history — revolution, civil war, Japanese invasion, Cultural Revolution. The film attempts a psychological understanding of absolute power and its contradictions through the life of this man, as he comes to terms with its loss. From omnipotence to humility: apparently a very Maoist tale. However, in its gaucheness — exacerbated by a poor script — the film is instead a weak and sentimental apologia for China's dynastic past. The depths are plumbed in scenes between Peter O'Toole — playing the Emperor's Scots tutor Reginald Johnson ("RJ") — and the adolescent Pu Yi, some of which reminded me of nothing so much as *The King and I*.

The film begins with the emperor's childhood inside the Forbidden City, with its six palaces and 9,999 rooms. Given a unique opportunity to film there, Bertolucci indulges in spectacle and exoticism, and creates a deceptively benign version of absolute power. Bathed by his attendant eunuchs, the toddler asks, "Is it true I can do anything I want?" and then splashes them

while shouting triumphantly, "I am the Son of Heaven!" With only Pu Yi's saccharine innocence at its centre, the social system appears ridiculous and baroque, almost harmless; despotism is disarmed. Only occasionally do we glimpse, stage left, images of feudalism's down side: three peasants walking yoked together by a stock; courtly women's deformed and bound feet . . .

Expelled from the Forbidden City, Pu Yi becomes a westernised playboy and then a puppet ruler for the Japanese in Manchuria. The scenes here come straight from the *Scott and Zelda* repertoire, and depend on crass stereotypes, of the Japanese in general, and in the characterisation of a woman friend of Pu Yi and his wife, an opium dealer, collaborator and bisexual seductress, the personification of corruption.

Three later moments betray both the film's incoherence and its implicit political leanings. Pu Yi lies to his interrogators about his willingness to collaborate with the Japanese and his desire to regain power, pretending that he was kidnapped and coerced. Yet this is not allowed to crack our sympathetic identification with him. In his cell, still resisting re-education, Pu Yi remarks cynically to his cellmate, "You're all just pretending! People don't change." Soon after, Pu Yi is transformed, accepts responsibility for his past and is released as a socially useful citizen. Yet no explanation is offered for this crucial psychological transition. Years on, in 1967, Pu Yi stumbles into a march of youthful Red Guards leading some bound and disgraced intellectuals: the Cultural Revolution is underway. Pu Yi spots the old prison governor and appeals to a Red Guard on his behalf. The Guard spits back at Pu Yi, "Join us, comrade, or fuck off!" The Guards force the governor to kow-tow to Mao's image, just as the Emperor's servants had kow-towed to him. Maoism becomes continuous with feudalism.

It has been claimed that with *The Last Emperor* Bertolucci has overcome a creative impasse that had lasted since 1900, over a decade ago. His pursuit of saturation publicity for the new film has certainly been creative. It is being sold mythically — at two levels, which work together. On the one hand, tube ads announce "He Was The Lord Of Ten Thousand Years . . . A True Story", for those who like their myths literal, sanctioned by "real history". And in the queue for the first midday show after the premiere, one in five were Chinese — so that the desire to re-open Chinese history is not trivial. On the other hand, publicity has mythologised the film's production history. Bertolucci went to China in 1984 with two scripts, daring to seek official approval, and to his delight the authorities accepted the one for *The Last Emperor*, which thus became the first ever Chinese-Western co-production. Hence permission to film inside the Forbidden City, and the cooperation of some 19,000 Chinese army guards as extras.

Bertolucci has made much of his in-depth research into Chinese cultural history, and of how he ran out of money, only to be miraculously saved (the film is financed by Hill Samuels and other western banks). Given this coalition of interests, the co-production itself is the single most significant aspect of the film, since it embodies the opening up of China culturally and economically to the West on an unprecedented scale — a move in

line with current Chinese liberalisation.

This all helps to clarify the film's implicit slant. What is being rehabilitated here is not so much Pu Yi as pre-Maoist China. Condemnation is reserved exclusively for Maoism's excesses. A useful exercise for the present regime in China, which has found willing western collaborators. Hollywood has nominated *The Last Emperor* for nine Oscars. □

THEATRE

Blood money

Victoria Radin

Carrie

LAWRENCE D. COHEN, MICHAEL GORE and DEAN PITCHFORD *Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon*

KICKING A LEG, thrusting a buttock here and a groin there, spending itself in the sort of laser beams that make you think it's Christmastime again in Oxford Street, the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Carrie* gyrates to the end of its three-week run at Stratford. Blithely evading grey London, it resurfaces on Broadway at the end of April, a bedizened whore from Thatcher's Britain.

It has gone on the streets to make money. The deal with its producer ensures a clear profit for the RSC of £200,000 from the Stratford season alone. If it lasts on Broadway for more than nine months, it will start to spin big cash. With a deficit from last year and insufficient state grants coming in, the RSC's public stance on *Carrie* is cynically pious: look what you made me do. "*Carrie* is the result of the government's new self-help policy," a blunt spokesperson has said.

All this is very double-edged. Terry Hands, the RSC's boss and one of the only two of its members to have worked on the show, has said ambiguously that he was directing *Carrie* "for the good of the RSC". At the same time he has claimed that *Carrie* is the "first serious music drama since *West Side Story*". That RSC spokesperson was only partially right. *Carrie* is the result of the government's self-help policy used as a pretext for a member of a classical drama company to have a shot at Schlock. It is the result of a spiritual famine which makes all of us, including Terry Hands, hunger for sweet, cheap food. The trouble is that *Carrie* isn't even that.

Unlike *Hair*, which was a youth-musical thrown together in a pad somewhere by a group of youths, *Carrie* is a youth-musical carefully fabricated in the laboratory by a team of oldsters. Its writer, Lawrence D. Cohen, who was also responsible for the infinitely more successful cult horror film of 1976 with Sissy Spacek, has again followed the lines of Stephen King's potboiling mega-seller on which both are based. *Carrie* is the story of a nerdy adolescent girl who lives with her holy-roller mother Margaret in Hicksville, Maine. When the girl belatedly suffers her first menstruation she is scapegoated by a gymload of her peers. On the same day, she discovers her gift for telekinesis, the ability to move objects by the power of the mind, and this enables her to challenge her mother

sufficiently to be able to go to the Prom. At the ball, the Cinderella-transformation occurs; but it is immediately followed by something rather darker. The class bad girl has arranged for a bucket of pig's blood to fall exactly on the girl's head. With this final humiliation, Carrie crosses the line from outsider to witchlette, calls on her powers and razes the building to the ground. She then turns home to deal with Mom. In a climactic orgy of doomed love-hate, each kills the other.

The book and the film — the latter of which had the dying Margaret strung up on a doorway in a Christ-like pose, studded with knives and moaning orgasmically — could serve (and probably has served) as a sociologist's dream material. Here is the nation of rejected children, obsessed with adolescence, elevating its post-feminist regard for mother-daughter rapports into a fatal love story on the scale of *Tristram and Iseult*. Here, too, in the vengeful Carrie, is the fear of female power, allied to our instructive hope that the victimised will be revealed as being somehow guilty of their own victimisation. On top of this is our post-Freudian knowledge of fairy tales. *Carrie* is a stew of every one of them that concerns the good and the bad mother, the wicked sisters, the frog prince, sleep and retardation.

Curiously, the novel is not quite schlock, because King was writing out of his own impulses. The film and the stage show were conceived second-hand with vastly more knowingness. The *Fame* team of Debbie Allen (choreography), Michael Gore (music) and Dean Pitchford (lyrics) have crossbred *Carrie*'s primal myths with the more sinister modern Cosmo-girl philosophy that made *Fame* (directed by our own Alan Parker) such a hideous blend of cheap cynicism and sentimentality.

To totally unmemorable tunes, the flimsily-clad girls of *Carrie* belt out songs that complain about split ends and boys "getting into my pants"; when yearning is required, Carrie can only sing: "Was it his voice? I haven't felt so good in quite awhile." Carrie is played appealingly by Linzi Hateley, but someone should have instructed her in the art of producing agreeable sounds at many decibels. Barbara Cook, in a floor-length black gown surmounted by a large gold crucifix, does little about being the nasty mother.

Scenes of the pair together, or solo, alternate mechanically with group teen numbers with no one beyond the good girl (in pink) and the bad girl (in red) differentiated. In the various gym scenes — but then Allen's choreography makes every youth scene look like an aerobics class — the voyeuristic basis of placing these taut young bodies onstage is most apparent. Allen's dancing is ugly and consists primarily of splits alternated with suggestive groin thrusts: in the girls' shower scene, one teenager even rubs a towel through her crotch, like a seasoned stripper.

The bucket of blood, instead of falling from the ceiling, is merely plonked on Carrie's head and her expected spectacular revenge leaks out unspectacularly in a few red and blue laser beams. On a vast white staircase that covers the stage, Carrie and Mom tell one another of their love while they slip the knife in: Carrie crawls downstairs and dies in the arms of the good girl. End: limply and bafflingly. *West Side Story* or

even *Sweeney Todd* it is not. As a casualty of Margaret Thatcher's self-help policy, in its typical gesture of cutting off its nose to spite its face, it is remarkable. □

TELEVISION

Comic cuts

Nigel Fountain

The South Bank Show: Lenny Henry

ITV, Sun. 6 March, 10.30-11.30pm

The Comic Strip Presents . . . Mr Jolly Lives Next Door

C4, Sat. 5 March, 10.50-11.50pm

"ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS about the programme?" asked Lenny Henry of the press after a screening of his *South Bank Show* profile. Not very many. Mostly we asked him about *Comic Relief*, whether he is considering adopting an Ethiopian, his American career prospects, his marriage to fellow comedian Dawn French. One journalist asked him about "coloured" comedians. Henry's eyes momentarily flickered. "Black", he said.

French features on the *South Bank Show* programme together with Ben Elton, host of C4's *Friday Night Live*, itself a show with some bite: the voice of the younger sector of what the grovelling classes label the chattering classes. "Every performer has to exercise self-censorship," Elton suggests. He is talking about racism and sexism but, as the tide of "alternative comedy" surges on over late-night schedules, other shortcomings might be considered. Both BBC2's Thursday slot *Cabaret at the Jongleurs* and C4's *Chelmsford 123* (from next Wednesday) show signs of sinking into the young middle-classes' easy chair. "Voting Tory is like wanking," a comic observed on *Jongleurs* last week, "everybody does it but nobody admits it." Quite.

Henry tells journalists that he will be showing up on *French and Saunders*, the women's new Friday night slot on BBC2. If you can't catch that you could switch on the repeats of C4's *Girls On Top* on Wednesdays, with French, Saunders and Ruby Wax, just completing her C4 series. Failing that, check out Saturday's *Comic Strip Presents* and there, in bit parts, are Saunders and French. They are funny, but perhaps not that funny, and like the poor and chat show hosts they make an honest living taking in each others' washing, and get a little tired.

Not as tired, it should be said, as the grovelling classes' Jimmy Tarbuck, the ghost in the TV machine at Henry's press conference. Tarbuck's rancid lounge bar pessimism is the polar opposite of Henry's verve. Like Billy Connolly before he did one too many Woganson's, Henry's humour appears effortless. *The South Bank Show* is illuminating on how it got that way. He is funny in the talent show clips that *SBS* resuscitates from the early 1970s; on the children's show *Tiswas*; on *Three Of A Kind*. He is much more funny, and perceptive, as Delbert Wilkins, as Deakus, the old man who remembers being black and British in the

earlier wave of baggy suits in the 1950s; as Theophilus K. Wildebeeste, the snooze'n'sex soulman.

The profile takes him back to those early 1970s days when a job at a Midlands factory offered him lifetime security. He quit and his agent got him annual booking on the stage version of . . . the *Black And White Minstrel Show*. That imperial echo ironically provided him with resonance, stagecraft. The act changed as he moved into TV and towards the orbit of alternative comedy. Henry the professional joined the club. His characterisations gained depth, the defensive racism drained from his act, he got funnier.

He wouldn't be as outrageous as Richard Pryor, one of his idols, he says on the programme. After the screening I asked him why not. He wouldn't be comfortable with the swearing, he replied: Pryor's comedy comes "from an angry place, mine comes from watching Mike Yarwood". I wasn't completely convinced, but then Pryor doesn't — in his *Richard Pryor Live* persona — get networked. Nor in the United States does Henry; the programme concludes with his playing a New York club, hustling Wildebeeste into the Big Apple's media consciousness. Comedians there, he says, "are like businessmen with jokes". It is a good line: its proof the unfortunate if lucrative fate of his *Three Of A Kind* colleague, driving the Murdoch/Twentieth Century Fox vehicle *The Tracey Ullman Show* which has just crashed on BBC2. Ullman's wit and sense of place vanished into Californian Cuisinart. When the pace gets — or stays — angry, the corporations reach for the blender.

And comics sometimes just throw up. The current Comic Strip series is a patchy collection: the sporadic brilliance of *The Strike*; the "old tossers" heavy metal and mega-lager of last Saturday's *More Bad News*; and, in this Saturday's *Mr Jolly Lives Next Door*, an erratic mix of English surrealism and American 1950s sick humour. English fantasy spelt a static social order and games around its structures; American sick a strand of liberal pessimism, kicking a car that wouldn't get started, or drove the wrong way. Now, in a time busy going nowhere, *Mr Jolly's* world is manic and brutalised.

I think this time there is a moratorium on gerbil jokes — did all kids have gerbils in the late 1960s? — but alternative comedy's motif for mainstream, Nicolas Parsons, is present. The eternal host didn't realise that for the new generation he is the

joke, suggested Stuart Cosgrove in a neat piece, "Trendy TV", for BBC2's *Did You See?* the other week. On that I think Cosgrove is wrong. Parsons does know, so he isn't. *Mr Jolly* smacks of desperation, not so much for laughs, although those are few, but just the condition. Parsons, despite snot, blood and vomit, cannot be destroyed.

I asked Henry what happened to his factory. It was closing down, he said; Japanese competition apparently.

SHORT CUTS: Three ways into popular music's past, with a present. **Rembetika: Music of the Outsiders** (C4, Sat. 5 March, 7.30-8.30pm) documents a 1920s' culture of "love, eroticism and life on the streets" — and dope. **Arena: An Andalusian Journey** (BBC2, Fri. 4 March, 9.30-10.20pm, part two Sat. 5 March, 8-9.5pm) handles Flamenco. **Showtime at the Apollo** (BBC2, Sun. 6 March, 9.35-10pm) features 1955 acts from the Harlem theatre where Pryor kicked off, this week with Basie, Washington, Amos Milburn et al. Trevor Griffith's **The Party is The Play On One** (BBC1, Tues. 8 March, 9.30-11.30pm). □

OPERA

Close quarters

Andrew Clements

Billy Budd
Coliseum

LONDON HAS LACKED a production of Britten's grandest opera for too long. The new English National Opera staging of *Billy Budd*, directed by Tim Albery with designs by Tom Cairns and Antony McDonald — the team that produced the searing *Trojans* for Welsh National and Opera North — is a virtually unqualified triumph, intelligently approached, dramatically vivid and musically effective. It explores the multi-layers of the libretto — a transmutation of Melville's novella by E.M. Forster and Eric Crozier — with subtlety and much insight.

That Britten's *Billy Budd* owes as much to its librettists and to Forster in particular as it does to Melville is underlined in the opening moments of the ENO conception. The opera is framed by the reminiscences of Captain Vere, recollecting as an old man the events which led to the destruction of Billy Budd; here Vere is recast as Forster, complete with gold-rimmed glasses and gaberdine raincoat, to lend the story his own flavour, and the opening scene immediately exploits that ambiguity. The officers of the British man-of-war HMS *Indomitable* are dressed in the uniforms of the 1790s, corresponding to the 1797 setting of Melville's original; the ratings could have stepped out of World War I, while what glimpses of the ship itself we're offered suggest it's a steel-armoured and steam-driven vessel from the same period.

That clash of realisms, overlaid with stylised

violence and repression — the swabbing of the decks through the first chorus becomes a slow-motion crawl under the constant threat of flogging — crystallises the atmosphere of menace and cruelty into which the newly impressed Budd is pitched; the homoeroticism of the story is never explicit, and this Billy Budd sometimes seems less the object of desire destroyed by his beauty and innocence than the inevitable victim of the system, the sacrifice necessary to preserve the honour and discipline of the service.

It is the society of the ship which Albery and his designers so tellingly realise without recourse to slavish naturalistic detail. The action is played on the slant of a pitching ship; the deck scenes use the full depth of the stage, complete with threatening, purple-bruised skies, while below decks everything is cramped and confined to the lowest third of stage height. In their awkward, almost conditioned reactions the officers are made to seem just as much the victims of their circumstances as the ratings they command so brutally, even if Vere is the only one to attempt to articulate their dilemma, while Claggart, the master-at-arms who plots Budd's destruction, is caught between the two worlds, unable to relate to either.

In such a carefully defined context the portrayals of the principal characters take on an extra load of significance. All three protagonists are realised by superb singing actors: Philip Langridge's Vere, doubting, almost weak-willed at times, so that his company's slavish devotion to him seems hard to accept; Richard Van Allen's Claggart, suave, reptilian, evil manifested in a peculiarly credible way; and Thomas Allen's Budd, announced as suffering from a throat infection on the opening night but handling the role with immense intelligence. Allen is now perhaps fractionally too old and experienced for the part — someone who plays Don Giovanni and Almaviva with such subtlety and distinction may simply now have too great a stage presence and authority to convey the idealistic innocence of Forster's, or Melville's, Budd — but his control of emotion and his open-hearted devotion to his sense of duty are hard to resist.

Underpinning that trio are a host of crisply defined smaller roles, a precisely drilled chorus and David Atherton's handling of the orchestral textures, presenting an eloquent case for *Budd* as the most musically profound of all Britten operas. Every detail is made to tell: the lonely saxophone solo that accompanies the flogging of the novice; the biting woodwind figures that express the major-minor ambiguities in which the score abounds; and, particularly, the sequence of electrifying chords that replaces the final meeting between Vere and Billy, the moment that Melville resists too. "Beyond the communication of the sentence, what took place at this interview was never known."

Billy Budd can seem a forbidding, an unsympathetic work in the wrong hands. Here it emerges as a deeply troubling, constantly relevant fable, in which the themes of good and evil, beauty, truth and honour are given perennial significance. Albery's direction, and Atherton's conducting, have restored the most complex of Britten's masterpieces with style and disturbing power. □

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Le Baudrillard Nouveau est arrivé

Peter Osborne, London E8

Jean Baudrillard (*NS* 19 Feb.) is bored. Philosophy has "disappeared". The tools of historical intelligibility have "disappeared". Even history itself has, apparently, gone too. Yet some people just keep on trying to understand the horrors of the recent European past and their relation to the thought and politics of the European present. How boring! Great indeed must be our "indifference" to our own situation when we can no longer find even the "strength" to forget the past.

We can, it seems, be thankful for small mercies. Baudrillard, however, is not to be numbered among them. For however acute certain of his insights into the narrow, repetitive and obsessive character of the current resurgence of interest in the origins and legacy of European fascism may be, they pale besides the fatuity of his *fin-de-siècle* sensibility.

Any journal with "New" in its title for as long as the *New Statesman* is bound to feel jumpy occasionally about keeping up with the times. But please, spare us the intellectual *nouvelle cuisine* — the Sixties sociology of mass society warmed over and served up with the latest (neo-Nietzschean) French sauce. And give a thought to those for whom politics remains a *living* concern. There are issues at stake in the debate in France over Heidegger which deserve a less flippant response, however "knowing" Baudrillard may be.

Dan Wilson, Edenbridge, Kent

Jean Baudrillard's piece on Nazism and our isolation from it has got to be one of the most outrageous exercises in intelligentsiac bunkum you have published since 1945.

For anyone with half an eye the ingredients of Nazism peep from the eyes of every moralising policeman with a mission, wait at low tide in the private, private talk of working-class English about Ireland and play around the lips of every authoritarian politician in their "people-must-learn-to" mode. They are: belief in the primacy of philosophical or religious principle over humanity, the need to seek scapegoats to exculpate oneself and the legitimisation of cruelty by institutionalised contempt. They are always with us. Hitler just happened to get the proportions and the temperature right.

Some like it not

Graham McCann, Kings College, Cambridge

Mandy Merck's review of my book on Marilyn Monroe (*NS* 19 Feb.) was so inaccurate and so full of cynicism that I feel obliged to respond (as, no doubt, you had expected). Apparently the Books Editor chose Mandy Merck for her ability/willingness to "demonstrate" how I indulge in "necrophilia". In fact, the "demonstration" merely involved tearing examples out of context and distorting my approach. For example, Merck "demonstrates" my criticism of popular culture by noting that I call sexist remarks "vulgar" (well, they are not subtle!) and "a cabaret performance 'tasteless'" — the performance in question featured a drag-

artist who rose from a coffin and sang of "Dead Marilyn" as lumps of flesh fell from his/her body: Merck must simply have very different values from anyone I know if she finds this tasteful. It is also "demonstrated" by Merck that I "want it both ways", as I both acknowledge the manufacturing of Monroe's image and I retain an interest in the person as an individual. This criticism suggests that Merck would judge that Hegel, Marx, and nearly every modern social theorist "wants it both ways". What I had *hoped* for was a fair hearing.



John Whel

Simon Dean, University of Cambridge

If you are not prepared to treat an author's work with respect, why bother to review it at all? I notice you happily use the name of Monroe on your cover — it is very sad that you did not find a reviewer who was intelligent enough to actually read the book.

Alison Finch, Chesterton Road, Cambridge

I was saddened by Mandy Merck's mean-minded, spiteful and envious review. McCann's book is informed by a moral sensitivity which puts to shame anything she publishes in *Screen*. Why didn't you invite someone to review the book who was willing and able to read it?

Richard Nicholson, King's College, Cambridge

I find Ms Merck's two introductory paragraphs and various other descriptive passages remarkably similar to sections from Dr McCann's text. As McCann's entire argument is inspired by a recognition that we cannot help the dead, to accuse him of "necrophilia" is one of the cheapest, stupidest taunts I have come across. McCann is a socialist who is also a remarkably kind human being. I think that is what you should aspire to — "merging" will not solve much.

Johnny Black, Urchfont, Wiltshire

It seems Mandy Merck too has been sucked into the Monroe Trap. Her review posed the question of what Marilyn did that caused novelists,

theorists, gossip writers and pop lyricists to gush into print about her time and again. She then spends maybe 1000-plus words lost in literary obscurity, dazzled by iconography, blinded by semiotics, before concluding that she doesn't know the answer to the question. Fine.

You could ask the same daft question about James Dean or Janis Joplin or Jack Kerouac. The answer is devastatingly simple, and would differ only in minor details: she rose from obscurity and poverty to wealth, fame and associations with the most powerful/respected people of her era; her rise was fuelled by her own native talent, wit and sexuality; she died young, miserable and alone. Isn't that enough?

Is that not a perfect movie/novel/song/soap opera plot? From nothing to everything to nothing again using only the talents we all have, at least potentially, from the day we are born. How could anyone fail to identify with her? The reason why only a few such figures emerge from their own debris to become icons is also simple. The public can only cope with a few of the damn things at a time. So we focus in.

After any of these people die, a body of material about them begins to accumulate and, if that catches the public imagination, more will be written, filmed, painted and so on. Simple, obvious. Given a few years these sparks become a fire, and that's what we're watching now. It might burn out, it might grow until Monroe becomes enshrined as head of a new religion. That's the uncertainty, but I'm not even sure if that's worth a thousand words.

Ill intent

Stan Walinets, London SW17

The government is desperately seeking a formula for reducing health service spending, but they don't seem to have any *really* radical ideas (*NS* 5 Feb.) But seek no more, Mr Moore. It exists. Why not use the ingenious formula developed out of the Homeless Persons Act 1977 by section 60 of the Housing Act 1985? With its help, public spending on housing is now almost down to nil. (True, £100 million or so is still spent on housing people in bed and breakfast; but that kind of public spending is desirable anyway, falling as it does under the heading of encouragement to the private sector.)

The formula, of course, is "intentionality". Before I describe its potential for the NHS perhaps I should explain its working, for those to whom the concept is unfamiliar.

The term "intentionally homeless", when written against your name in a council's housing register, means that you do not qualify for housing. You do not need anywhere to live because you are intentionally without accommodation. You *wanted* to sleep on the pavement. This is how it works. Say, you lose your job and can no longer meet the mortgage repayments and the building society finally repossesses its property — your home. When you tell the housing official that you stopped making the payments, his face says "Ah!" and his pen writes "I/H. No Council responsibility." In vain do you tell him you didn't *mean* to stop paying. You stopped, he says, intentionally. If you've a family the law requires no more than to

give you four weeks' bed and breakfast.

Clever, isn't it? And flexible. The legal term "intentionally homeless" is capable of being interpreted by an imaginative council to fit almost anyone who applies.

Returning now to Mr Moore and his NHS funding problems. Why not, Mr Moore, have a Medical Admissions Officer at every hospital, whose job is to establish whether a would-be patient is *intentionally* ill? And if they are, then turn them away. The scope for savings is enormous. For example:

Medical Admissions Officer: Next, please.

Would-be Patient (harrowing cough): I think I've got cancer, Doctor.

MAO: Are you, or have you ever been, a smoker?

WBP: Yes.

MAO: Intentionally ill. Sorry. Next?

Get the idea, John? Give it a try. Cut down those waiting lists. Make fabulous savings. The "New Intentionality Formula" will work on almost all known illnesses. Even mental illness . . .

More from Hugo's fans

Fiona Pitt-Kethley, St Leonards, E. Sussex

I must be one of many *NS* readers sad to see the departure of your TV critic, the distinguished and witty writer, Hugo Williams. Please do your utmost to persuade him to stay on — he won't be replaced easily.

Misunderstood metaphor

Stephen Howe, Ruskin College, Oxford

A "freefire zone" is one where soldiers are free to fire, where anything that moves is a legitimate target. It is not, as Simon Eckett (*Letters* 26 Feb.) seems to believe, a zone free *from* fire. Having thus utterly misunderstood my metaphor, it's no wonder he didn't understand my argument. I'm not urging all philosophers to pontificate on sexual mores, nor all historians to try their hands as film critics. Nor, for that matter do I want to prevent their doing so. I only wish that those who do would observe *some* of the standards of reasoned argument which supposedly distinguish their professions. The comparison between Habermas' politico-cultural polemics and those of Norman Stone or Roger Scruton intended to contrast the former's care and seriousness with the latter pair's scattergun blasts at everything to the left of their

rather limited field of vision. The difference in styles, I'm suggesting, says depressing things about our ethos of public debate.

For my part, I don't understand why Mr Eckett thinks Habermas' communicative theory insidiously totalitarian. The claim seems to rest on the belief that interpersonal communication requires the surrendering of our individuality: a belief for which I see no warrant. Nor do I understand what Mr Eckett means by looking forward to a "new heroic Creationist age", though I presume he's evoking Nietzsche rather than the Scopes Monkey Trial.

Tower Hamlet Liberals fight back

Eric Flounders, Leader, Tower Hamlets Council

It is difficult to know whether to dismiss Patrick Curry's article "Tower Hamlets tragedy" (*NS* 11 Dec.), as a litany of lies or a farrago of fantasy. Let's settle for both.

Mr Curry, safe in the suburban smugness of Brook Green, says the Liberals of inner-city Tower Hamlets, busy grappling with immense social and financial problems while he manicures his nails, are racists. He patronisingly decrees this from his sanitised pillar of moral rectitude, not on the basis of personal experience, not because he's troubled to buy a tube ticket down to the East End, but because of what he's read in one or two newspapers and because he was upset by demonstrations at the Liberal Assembly! Dear God, it's bad enough having the Party stuffed with intellectual snobs uninterested in getting up to the elbows in real power, without having them make inane judgments on those of us at the sharp end based solely on the trendy outpourings of our political opponents!

Mr Curry says we're racists because the Liberal-controlled council has decided, after much thought and examination of all the facts, that fifty allegedly homeless families — the bulk of whom are Bengali — are intentionally homeless and, therefore, not the council's legal responsibility. He says it despite the fact that since it came to power the Liberal administration has rehoused over 1,200 homeless families, the vast majority Bengali — more than any other local authority in Britain. He says it despite the fact that one of the Liberals' first actions was to boost the budget for the homeless from Labour's paltry £4.5m to over £18m — the largest sum either in cash terms or as a percentage of total budget of any council in Britain.

He says it despite the fact that the percentage of homeless families declared intentionally homeless under the Liberals is *less* than it was under the previous Labour administration, about whom the self-righteous *Guardian*, *Independent*, *New Statesman*, Patrick Curry and the Bishop of Stepney were all strangely silent. He says it despite the fact that the borough's Homeless Families Unit, bolstered by *increased* staff since the Liberals came to power, (from 21 to 35) continues to accept over 90 per cent of the people reporting to it, whereas the next most generous London borough accepts under 60 per cent — and some Labour councils have responded to homelessness by closing their Homeless Persons Units altogether! He says it

despite the fact that in the last twelve months Tower Hamlets' strenuous efforts have *reduced* the number of families in bed and breakfast accommodation by 11 per cent, whereas in the rest of largely Labour-controlled inner London the number has *increased* by 22 per cent.

He even sees racism in our cuts in funding to some "voluntary" groups, and cites three "ethnic minority" organisations as being our main target. One third of his sample is not even a voluntary group at all, but a department of the council — which by its *nature* has never received a grant — but in view of Mr Curry's well-documented distaste for facts, we'll let that pass.

The truth is that the Liberal Administration dispensed some £2m in grants to the "voluntary" sector last year, the largest sum for any year ever except 1986/87. But, unlike the previous administration (or the GLC), it rationalised grant-giving; it gave (and will continue to give) generously to vital organisations providing essential services for local people most in need. So Citizens' Advice Bureaux, for example, got *more* than ever before. And it ruthlessly cut money to politically motivated groups who provide little of value other than a jobs-for-the-trots gravy train, or who do little for the *local* community because they are so busy providing entertainment for pseudo-socialists from Hampstead. Out, too, went groups which, if they have the support they claim, are quite capable of raising their own funds rather than sponging off the poor of Tower Hamlets, and those which duplicate (or triplicate) the work of others.

The biggest cut of all was *not* to any ethnic minority group, but to the Half Moon Theatre. And an interesting exercise that was! I was Leader of the Council at the time that cut was announced, and I received the barrow loads of abuse. The letters came from everywhere. I was accused of being a philistine in a host of accents in letters from Virginia Water, Devon, Dundee, Stockport, Stoke Poges — and Fulham! Motions were passed by union branches in places I'd never heard of. And yet, although 85 per cent of the residents of Tower Hamlets are Council tenants, I didn't receive one single letter of complaint from any council estate in our own borough!

We were not elected by the monied residents of Highgate or Brook Green to provide entertainment for their idle hours; we were elected (unlike Mr Curry, who's never been elected to anything), by the people of Tower Hamlets to provide better services, of the kind *they* want and need. And we are busy supplying them with what they need as fast as we can: by the time our first term ends in 1990 we will have reduced the number of empty properties in the borough by two thirds (it's already down by a third); we will have provided estate management teams on virtually every estate; we will have devolved power almost completely from the town hall to local people; we will have rooted out waste, duplication and inefficiency; we will have put central heating and entryphones in every council block currently without; we will have put new lifts in almost every high-rise; we will have re-lit practically every street in the borough; we will have spent £120m *more* on housing than our HIP allocation (whereas the

- PALESTINIANS
- JEWS IN AFRICA AND ASIA
- ARMENIANS

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previous administration couldn't even spend the allocation!); we will have provided new leisure pools; we will have built more new houses than have been built for twenty years — and we will have rehoused more Bengalis than any other council in Britain.

We are getting on with the job we were elected to do, and we will pay no heed to the sanctimonious simpering of suburban Liberals who are incapable of stomaching the realities of power and radical decision-making.

Truthful society

Michael Brennan, Manchester

In the wake of your coverage of *Stalker* (NS 12 Feb.) and the findings by the courts in the "Birmingham Pub Bombings" case it is clear that the attitudes of their authorities and judges have compromised the entire basis of democracy.

We, the people, demand a society based on truth. If a common man transgresses the law, he is quite properly tried under a judicial system that only exists because of *truth* under oath. If the truth *anywhere* proves to be unpalatable, then that truth has properly served its ordained purpose. The offenders must be rooted out, regardless of their *artificial* station in life. They must be properly brought to book, and replaced by people with integrity, who will adhere to the truth. When the concept of truth becomes

subjective, as it clearly seems to be under this government, then we are all but finished as a nation under democracy.

It is an outrage that the manipulators of truth are wearing the rank of high office that they do, and casually deciding our moral standards for us. It is this "casual" offhand manner of theirs that says to the world that the House of Commons is dead. Parliament is but a rump, to assuage the electorate into thinking otherwise. The Right Honourable and Honourable Conservative Members represent nobody but the ideas of the Prime Minister. They are lackeys, bereft of integrity with, naturally, a few exceptions, like Heath and Powell.

The harvest to be reaped from the years of Thatcherism will be truly horrendous, as continually and persistently standards from our "leaders" drop to pathetic levels that at times defy belief. When are we going to call "enough" to this tatty shyster regime? Traditional values, so often evoked by Margaret Thatcher, have nothing to do with what is being exhibited by the top-brass of society. Integrity, today, is a source of cynical laughter.

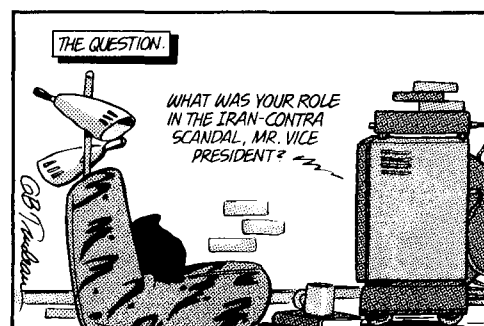
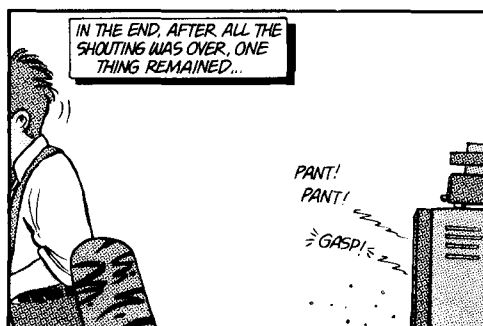
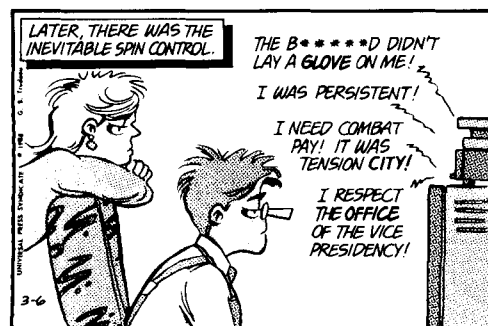
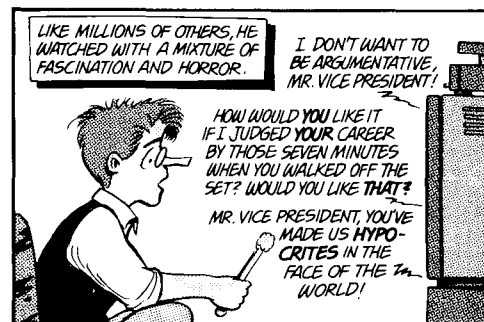
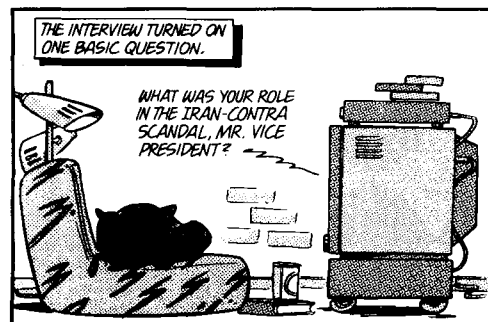
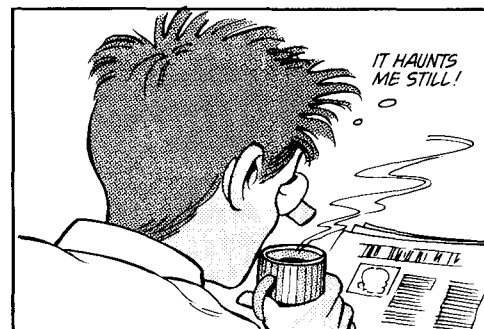
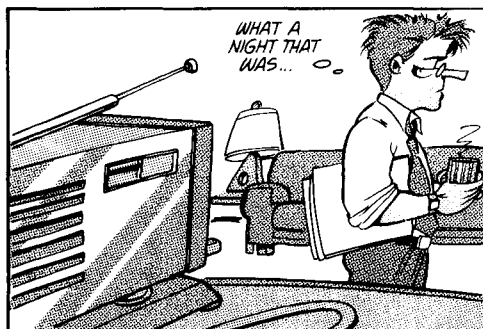
The people of this once great country should awaken, before we find ourselves entrenched in a new "Dark Age", already well into its infancy. When society balks at caring for sick and dying human beings, old and young alike, so that it can gain a few extra "pieces of silver", and the profiteers of "private health care" can gorge

themselves on money gleaned from human sickness and disease, then I fear we are well on the way to perdition. What a nauseating collection of human misfits do rule!

Condom culture

Neil Lancaster, Cambridge

Condom cultures (NS 19 Feb.) may be missing the point, but then they would be knowing who funds them. If you are a condom manufacturer, then your main aim is to maximise sales, and when the restrictions on advertising were lifted the biggest market was luring sensible, monogamous couples off their previous Sunday morning contraceptive device with 'soppy' ads. If you are a government then your biggest market is the moral majority who can be lured off any sensible discussion about sexual behaviour by linking sex with symbols of death. If your market is those sexually-active people most at risk from Aids then you need to appeal to those 9/100 who have had more than one sexual partner in the past year and those 2/100 who have had five or six (British Market Research Board). As your ad correctly points out, these are people who recognise that sexual activity can be frequent, varied and fun. The advertising industry knows how to appeal, it just doesn't get the right sort of money, and once again a heterosexual and homosexual minority are conveniently ignored.



CLASSIFIED ADS: 01-739 1645

New Statesman

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DISPLAY RATES: £11 per s.c.c. + VAT (min 3cm)

Charities/Agenda £9.50 per s.c.c. inc. VAT min 3cm

LINAGE: All categories 45p per word inc. VAT, (min 20 words)

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PURSUIITS/ Box No. charge £2.50

AGENDA Send ads to: **Classified Dept, New Statesman,
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THEOSOPHY explains reincarnation, karma, God, man and nature. Talks, informal meetings. Sun. 8pm. SAE for free literature, book list. ULT, 62 Queens Gdns. London W2. W43.6

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CANDIDATES are invited for consideration in the Labour Party's selection in the **SURREY WEST EUROPEAN CONSTITUENCY**. Please contact Brian Mountain, 16 Warwick Road, Ash Vale, Aldershot GU12 5PL, Hants. Telephone 0252 515456. W4.2

WRITER wishes to hear from women and men who have recently (in the past 3 years) experienced the ending of a long-term (10 years +) relationship. Confidentiality will be respected. Box (09)0106. W10.2

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TWO IMPORTANT new contributions to the nuclear debate from Scientists Against Nuclear Arms: "Counterissues" (£2.74), answers the Government's Defence and Disarmament "Issues"; "Nuclear Illusions" (£5.95), a critique of the recent Defence White Paper. Orders, or requests for Publications List, to SANA, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG. W10.3

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APPLICATIONS in writing with full CV by **Wednesday, 9 March 1988** to: **Joanna Watt, Greenpeace Ltd., 30-31 Islington Green, London N1 8XE.** Regrettably, only shortlisted candidates can be responded to. **No telephone calls please.**

We welcome applications from people regardless of marital status, sex, race, sexual orientation or disability.

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APPOINTMENTS

Contact **Carol Anne Brown**
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OV SELECTION have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers. Phone Odette Veazey. OV Selection (Emp. Agt), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345. N49.34

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Applications are invited from men and women to continue the development of ADIU's computerised information and publication services on defence and disarmament, especially the development and promotion of a new on-line information digest, aimed at the media and the research community. Also to develop computer assisted filing systems, an information referral service and use of desktop publishing. Other duties will include assisting with the organisation and maintenance of ADIU's information system, the answering of requests and the editing and production of ADIU's publications. Candidates should be graduates with a sound knowledge of defence and disarmament issues. Ideally, they should also have some experience of designing and implementing computerised systems. Experience of writing, editing and production of publications would be an advantage.

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BORDEAUX, Carnivore interested in bar football sought by Dorking vegetarian office-worker. Gender immaterial but prefer journalist or similar. Only the most generous individual in the Western hemisphere need apply. Photo and air ticket appreciated. w10.7

CHEERFUL, SPORTY, academic gentleman, 52, seeks comely, attractive stylish, slim professional, non-smoker woman, 35-45, with wide interests. Phone essential. Box (09)0105. w10.8

CONTENTED MURMURINGS from thinkers who do. **FLORA HANDLEY INTRODUCTIONS**, The Bookshop, 30 Lambs Conduit Street, WC1. 01-509 2690. w10.9

CLASSIC CASE Single mother, 30, high-rise inner-city dweller still smiling seeks stilt-walker for romantic balcony scene. London. Photo? Box (09)0108. w10.10

DATLINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating, Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011. w10.20

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1% HOUSE EQUITY for each month living together with sad-faced young woman Reference Librarian Chiswick. 1977/8. Box (09)0919. w10.11

JEWISH VEGETARIAN widow, 49, slim, attractive, with many interests and hobbies, seeks presentable man 50s, intelligent and witty, sensitive, stable and solvent. London. Box (09)0925. w10.12

POSTAL INTRODUCTIONS to interesting new friends. Details and application form from: Hobbylink (O.M. Cosmos), Little Westwell, Rolvenden Road, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6TY. w10.13

PRETTY WOMAN, 37, enjoys writing and Woody Allen films, seeks interesting, warm man to love. Photo please. Box (09)0922. w10.14

REFORMING FEMALE workaholic, early thirties, seeks friendly male company, to broaden social life. Enjoys countryside, seaside, cooking. Lives English/Welsh border. Box (09)0921. w10.15

SINGLES MAGAZINE. Over a thousand new introductions, 12 monthly issues, send £15 (cheque or PO) to Singles Dent. CL, 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AH. w49.9

TALL, PROF. male, late fifties, interests: music, walking, people, seeks friendship/relationship with warm, caring woman. Kent, Essex, Dartford Tunnel region. Box (08)0913. w9.9



OLD FRIENDS
DOES LIFE
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40?

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Details from: **Anne Brent,**
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Telephone: **01-226 5432**

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33 TRYING to achieve socialism, feminism and independence, asks for honest, unattached, humorous man to reply. Box (08)0908. w9.10

WIDOW RETURNING from abroad, young fifties, happy educated professional, seeks similar gentleman, interested in literature, theatre, travel, food, people — for talks, walks, dinner. SW England. Box (08)0910. w9.11

YOUNG, MIDDLE-AGED guy, affectionate, sense of humour, into countryside, kids and travel (to Central America), keen to meet nice, interesting woman. N.W. Box (09)0923. w10.17

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SAVOIR VIVRE,
Ref NS/EN, Tynron,
Thornhill DG3 4LG,
or ring 084 82611 anytime.

AGENDA

Deadline: 2pm Mondays

MON 7 MAR

LONDON HISTORY WORKSHOP SEMINAR Sioban Mullally: 'English Colonial policies in Sixteenth Century Ireland'. 7.30pm at The White Swan, 14 New Row, WC2.

TUES 8 MAR

KINGS CROSS LABOUR PARTY Public Meeting on the Poll Tax with Reg Race, Barbara Hughes. 8.00pm. Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London, WC1.

RIGHTS AND HUMANITY hosts human rights talk: Speaker Jan Martenson, Director UN office Geneva, 'protecting human worth and dignity'. 6-7pm Grand Committee Room, House of Commons.

SAT 12 MAR

TORN HALVES: Avant Garde and Popular Culture in the 1980s. Univ. of Southampton/Dept. of English. Colloquium 10am-7pm. Physics Building. £10, £5 Students and unwaged. For more information and tickets contact Ken Hirschkop c/o English Dept. Univ. of Southampton (0703) 559122 Ext. 2177.

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6421 ABTA 94031.

THE HOTEL, Isle of Colonsay, Argyll, PA61 7YP. Most isolated in G.B. Tel: 0951 223 316. w2.18

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Agents ATOL 313/922

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Weekend competition

No 3015

Set by Gray Dorn

Titles, please, for the new magazine that will result from the *New Statesman*/*New Society* merger. By Wednesday 16 March.

No 3012

Set by Gray Dorn

John Betjeman-inspired verse on the results of LRT's "plan" to franchise tube stations.

Report

By Gray Dorn

Thirty-seven entries, including one from LRT pointing out that the *Observer* story inspiring this competition was "fiction". They also expanded on their denial in a poem, showing, as you'll see, that LRT are better at composing verse than looking after their unfortunate passengers. Just. Otherwise, re. the above, I'd like to say that whatever else a merger may mean for this magazine, *the Competition will continue*.

Observer, whither common sense?
Your readers cannot be so dense.
Is truth an inconvenience
To spoil a tale?

Kentucky Chicken, Wimpy too
Might take some space on platform two
But Theydon Bois and Waterloo
Are not for sale.

Commercial pressures now abound,
Impinging on the Underground.
But freelance porters won't be found
At Maida Vale.

NEIL GORRIE (LRT)

It's awf'ly bad luck on South Ealing,
Not finding a sponsoring group —
With the Salvation lot now appealing,
For funds to serve bread and hot soup.

Imagine the pong and the racket,
Of madman and dosser and crone —
But if backers can't make a quick packet,
Do-gooders just lower the tone.

Swiss Cottage has buckets of lolly,
The wizardest station on earth,

With saunas and massage (Oh, golly!) —
It's only in trains there's a dearth.

Gaze on new architectural splendours,
Rare cuboid of concrete and steel,
Where priests from the City bless spenders,
And Mammon's communicants kneel.

TIM HOPKINS

We're lending High Street Kensington to Conran;
East Dagenham will strike a blow for Ford's;
How we pray the C of E,
Will be Parson's Green's lessee,
And St John's Wood will be suitable for Lord's.

At Selfridge's we're pushing Oxford Circus,
With a Bogle, Bartle, Hegarty chef d'oeuvre;
War on Want has Charing Cross;
Fulham Broadway has Moss Bros.
While for feminists — would Seven Sisters serve?

But when at last they've used up all the stations
And are turning their attention to the trains;
It's at that point I will go,
Back by bus to Pimlico,
And with some regret proceed to blow my brains.

DAVID TOLEY

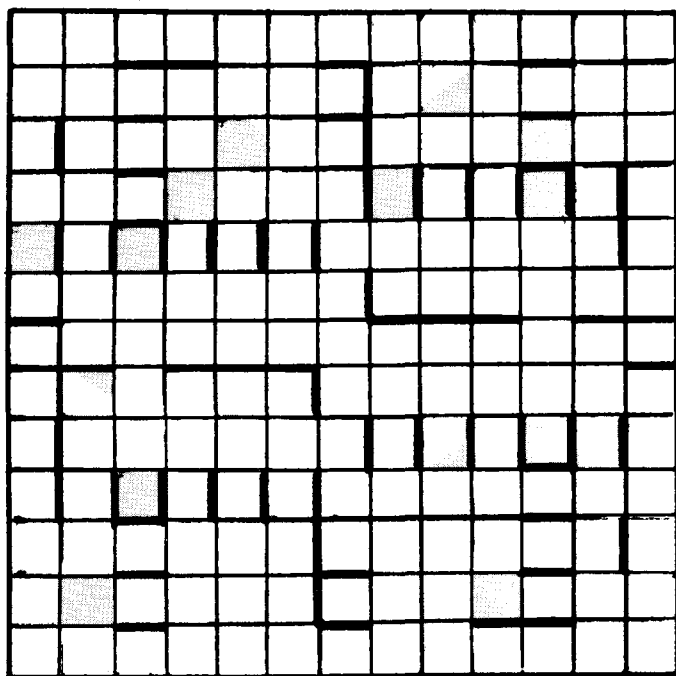
Salamanca 131

"The Singer & The Song"

PRIZES: Copies of the *Collins Paperback English Reference* set for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to *Salamanca 131*, *New Statesman*, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 28 March.



**COLLINS
DICTIONARIES**



Solvers must determine where in each quarter normally-entered answers belong. The three unclued across lines and the one down consist of snatches of a song (slightly edited) for whose unchecked letters VIEW YR TEXT. Shaded areas of the grid may be reformed to give (two words) the singer.

Name _____

Address _____

NW: Abandoned now thru lack of value
Fruit in can is acceptable perhaps
My child, a boy, brought up a girl at heart
Part of insect that's to seize head of prey and give it horrible use
Patterned fabric, one with most fancy weave
Some radiation soft and warm about
Something precious you sent out for
Tatty person, see, in loud coat is dressed up
What may make her gain some sense
What may make you horrified when one's round

NE: At end of each performance when AC/DC do another one?
French poet, a rogue, excellent, now old
Girl, you say, that's delicate
It could show whose turn it is to organise store and start retailing
Obliquely, what could mat wool without question
On a ship's launch chap is departing to remove ropes
Round tree's covering: my leaves are used as spinach
Yobbos always found around Soho perhaps
You need what's cold and white?
Take in freon, possibly
You'd expect them to harmonise right notes?

SW: A fashion almost completely lacking scale?
Chap starts at sunrise to take in rays
Fish with ugly mug gulping air possibly
Mysterious race possibly shelters one
Palms (as you might have it) around foot base
Salt: cut me a piece

Sloth without taste for rodent
Vine-like stem, twisty pole with a mass on top
What you may see on a "piece" with a pretty head, round?

SE: Essential for knights beginning to tire in races
Like the garden that's weed free, sprinkled with sparkling drops
No longer surround mounty in what might have been evil
Old measure: one outside here's subject to variation
Old tower with one round stone atop, round, what?
Such balls bowled are messy, most messy
Through which prisoner can be observed when being all but interrogated
Trouble with nightmares? He'd rig a cure
You'd have expected them to harmonise English tunes right

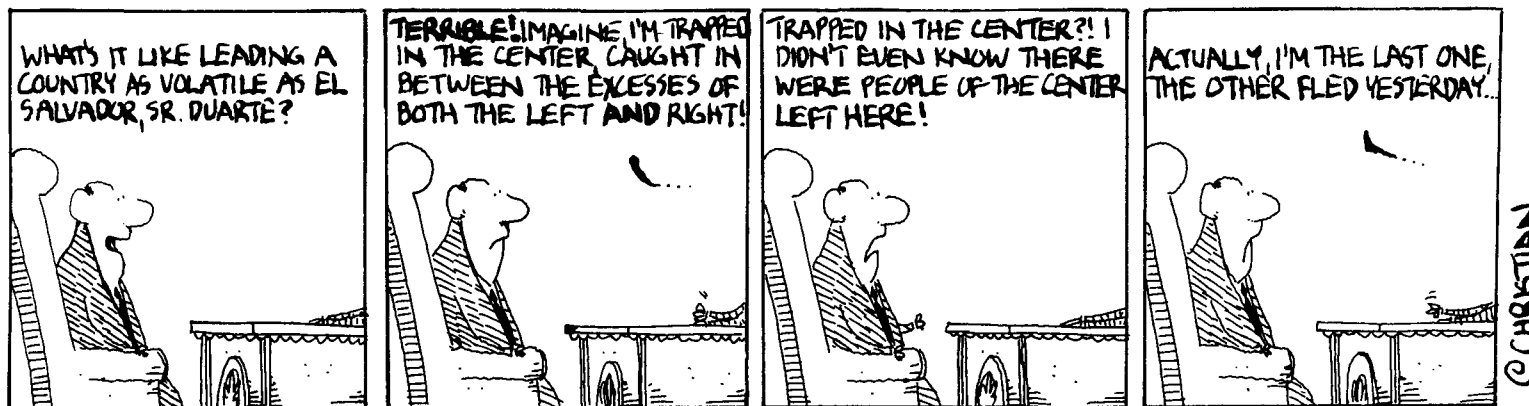
Solution to Salamanca 130

A	S	S	A	S	S	I	N	A	T	E	D
P	A	I	S	A	C	O	C	A	I	N	E
E	G	E	S	T	D	U	R	D	E	E	
A	T	S	L	A	S	E	I	X	R		
R	O	T	U	P	T	C	P	R	E	H	S
T	B	A	R	D	I	S	P	I	R	I	T
H	A	N	S	O	C	A	B	E	L	L	A
I	C	E	A	U	V	N	M	L	O	A	K
N	C	A	A	V	I	D	E	O	C	R	E
G	O	R	S	E	L	A	S	H	K	A	R
U	B	E	T	A	L	S	O	U	T	H	
P	E	R	I	A	N	L	I	P	P	E	R

Omitted letters in *sHag tobacco*, *viOlin deerstalker*, *hansOM cab*, *cocainE*, *PerSian Slipper* spell Holmes: image is of pipe.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 130

Sally Dixon (Croydon)
Peter Biddlecombe (London N14)
Mr P. W. McCombie (London E3)



Chess

LAST YEAR the SWIFT tournament was an extremely strong double-round event (1-2 Kasparov and Ljubojevic, followed by Karpov, Korchnoi, Timman and Tal). This year's version, starting in Brussels on 31 March, is something more than just another "super-tournament". It introduces a new structure for international tournament chess, as it is to be the first in a series of six grand prix events for the *Chess World Cup*, organised by the Grandmasters Association.

In many respects this is a welcome development. It has been a curious anomaly that, while the professional player's main line of business has been competition in tournaments, the showcase of the world championship was conducted as a match. A grand prix introduces a wider cast and spares us the disappointments associated with premature elimination in a knock-out system. It is undeniably a boon to chess journalists. At the moment they face a problem over which of a host of tournaments they should cover. In the future there will be a reason for giving priority to the coverage of grand prix events.

But I can't help a feeling of unease about the way the Grandmasters Association is operating. Granted that a grand prix is a good idea, should the GMA be organising it? This worry is connected with the thought that although

there may be cases in which the pursuit of individual interest is of benefit to the community, there are also plenty of instances in which the only result is that some profit at the expense of others. Now you might think that even if you count in other professional chessplayers along with grandmasters, you have a pretty select body and it is these people who stand to gain. But the 25 participants who have been selected by the GMA for the 1988-89 World Cup represent only a small fraction of active GMs.

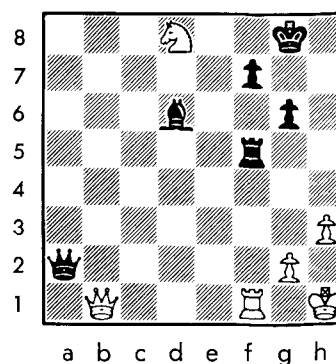
Among those 25 are to be found the leading lights of the GMA. And why not? Who would want to leave out Kasparov, Karpov, Timman and Ljubojevic? The problem concerns the adverse effects on those who are left out. Since the World Cup runs right through to a tournament in Skelleftea which is scheduled to end in September 1989 these effects can be rather serious. There will be other tournaments for "the rest", but their status will surely suffer and quite probably the prize-funds offered as well. It seems strange to have an Association for Grandmasters operating in such a way. It risks causing serious professional damage to the careers of the GMs it does not select for the World Cup.

For example, of the English GMs Short, Speelman and Nunn are in the 25. But Chandler isn't. Tony Miles, late of England, now of the USA, is also just one of the rest. Larsen is out, but Spassky is in. A justification for the selection can be

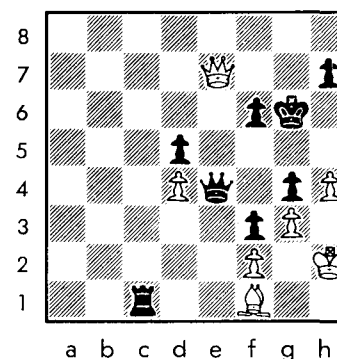
given on the basis of recent performance. But in a year's time the inclusions and exclusions may well seem strange. One can understand that for the moment overriding importance was attached to getting the thing started. There was no sign that FIDE would ever have introduced a grand prix without this initiative from the GMA. But I would urge the GMA that, in order to avoid relegating some of their members to a second division for too long, they should in future run the World Cup within a single calendar year.

Now, to get down to some positions. A is from a game, with Black to play and win. B and C share a common theme, though one is a game and the other is a study. In both White plays and draws. Solutions next week.

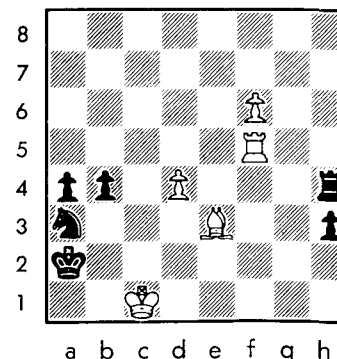
Position A



Position B



Position C



George Botterill

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☐ Signs of the times: the Army has gone beyond developing yet another new boot — now it's working on an official issue trainer shoe. Recruits these days, said a supervising officer on the project, "come straight from the womb wearing trainers", and many boys have seldom worn anything else right through schooldays... — *Observer* (Dianne E. Manning)

☐ Britain's soldiers will be ready for anything at a moment's notice — thanks to a new-look bayonet with bottle openers attached. It's just one of the improvements in combat clothing and gear which will be introduced next year. — *Daily Mirror* (Mr D. Brown)

☐ A Royal Marines officer told a court yesterday that he was part of an imaginary cavalry charge when he thundered up the M5 motorway at top-up speeds. He said that he was imbued with patriotic pride by the rousing strains of Tchaikovsky on his car stereo. He was listening to Wellington's Victory March, written to celebrate the Battle of Waterloo. — *Exeter Express and Echo* (A. Kirkby)

☐ The case was brought to light last August when Greenwich Council's Trading Standards sent samples from two brands of condoms to the London Scientific Services for testing against the British Standard. The British Standard allows a maximum of three per cent to have holes. — *Kentish Times* (John Garrett)



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